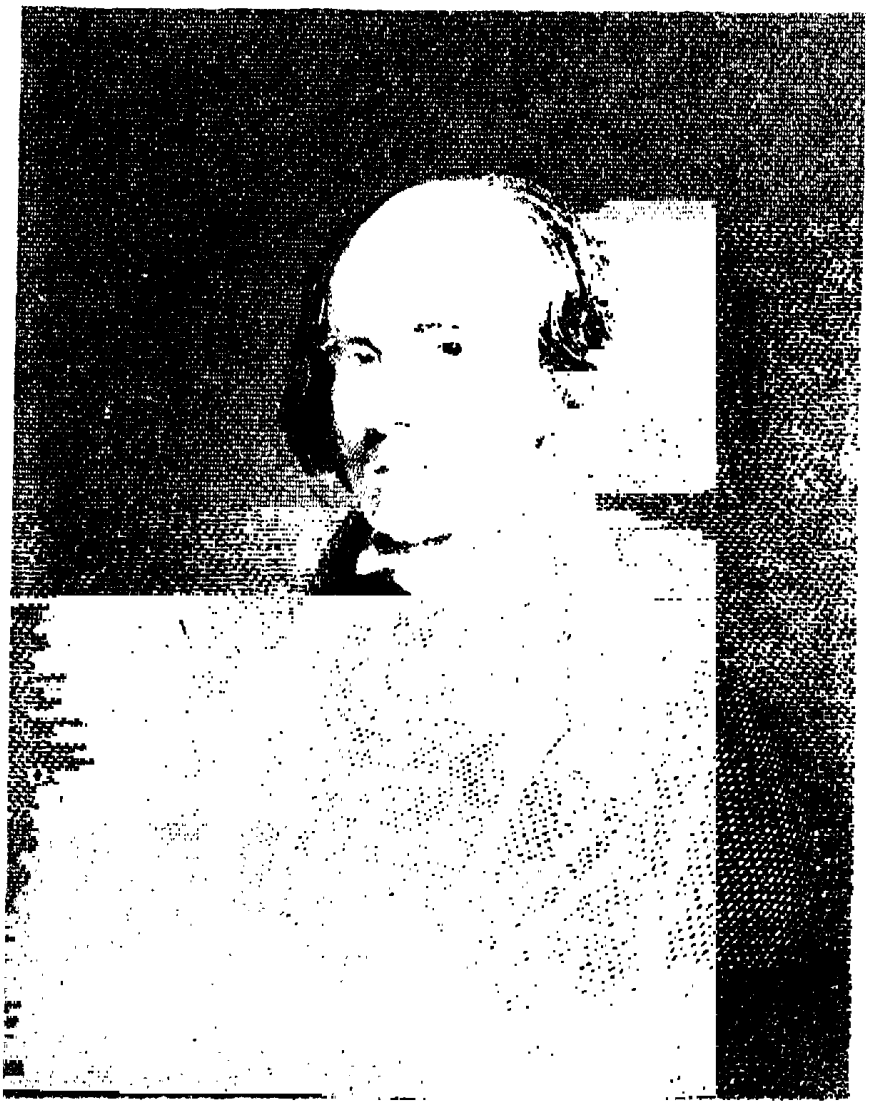


THE LIVES

OF

THE MOST EMINENT

BRITISH

PAINTERS, SCULPTORS,

AND

ARCHITECTS.

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

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THESE LIVES

OF

BRITISH SCULPTORS

ARE

VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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THE BRITISH SCULPTORS.

GRINLING GIBBONS.

The first British name of any eminence in Sculpture is that of Grinling Gibbons; of whose birth and parentage we have from Vertue two different accounts— both particular and both probably erroneous. The one authority, Murray, the painter, relates, that he was born in Holland, of English parents, and came to London at the age of nineteen: the other, Stoakes, (a relation of Stone, the architect and sculptor,) says his father was a Dutchman; but that Gibbons himself was born in Spur Alley, in the Strand. "This is circumstantial," says Lord Orford, "and yet the former testimony seems most true, as Gibbons is an English name, and Grinling probably Dutch." Tradition, while it claims him for a Londoner, is silent concerning his foreign parentage; his maternal descent, like that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, was probably from Holland:—but wherever he was

born, he was very young when he first distinguished himself in London. We then find him living in Belle Sauvage Court, Ludgate Hill, where Lud's terrific image stood in the days of Bede: here he exhibited a pot of flowers, so exquisitely carved that the individual leaves quivered and shook with the motion of the passing coaches. Stone, on whose authority this story is told, has not said of what material those sensitive flowers were formed; but most probably they were of wood—in which case there is nothing to be much marvelled at. While residing here, he executed the capitals, the cornices, and eagles of Dorset Garden Theatre: but all these specimens of his early workmanship have disappeared.

From Belle Sauvage Court, Gibbons removed to Deptford, where he shared a house with a musician. Here he was accidentally discovered by the accomplished John Evelyn, who thus relates the interview and its consequences. "1671, January 18. This day I first acquainted his majesty with that incomparable young man, Gibbons, whom I lately met with in an obscure place, by mere accident, as I was walking near a poor solitary thatched house in a field in our parish (Deptford), near Sayes Court. I found him shut in; but, looking in at the window, I perceived him carving the large Cartoon of Tintoret, a copy of which I had myself brought from Venice, where the original painting remains. I asked if I might enter; he opened the door civilly to me, and I saw him about such a work, as, for curiosity of handling, drawing, and studious exactness, I had never before seen in all my travels. I asked him why he worked in such an obscure

and lonesome place: he told me, it was that he might apply himself to his profession without interruption, and wondered not a little how I had found him out. I asked him if he was unwilling to be made known to some great man, for that I believed it might turn to his profit: he answered, that he was but as yet a beginner, but would not be sorry to sell off that piece: on demanding his price, he said, an hundred pounds. In good earnest the very frame was worth the money, there being in nature nothing so tender and delicate as the flowers and festoons about it, and yet the work was very strong: in the piece were more than an hundred figures of men, &c. I found he was likewise musical; and very civil, sober, and discreet in his discourse. There was only an old woman in his house."

The genius of the man, and the gentleness of his manners, made such an impression on Evelyn, that he acquainted King Charles with the discovery he had made at Deptford, and requested leave to bring Gibbons and his sculpture to Whitehall. The king declared he would go to Deptford and see him, but the artist anticipated his majesty, and came with his work to Whitehall—Evelyn shall tell the conclusion of the story. "The king saw the carving at Sir R. Browne's chamber, who was astonished at the curiosity of it, but was called away and sent it to the queen's chamber. There a French peddling woman, who used to bring baubles out of France for the ladies, began to find fault with several things in it which she understood no more than an ass or a monkey. So, in a kind of indignation, I caused it to be taken back, and

sent down to the cottage again. He, not long after, sold it to Sir G. Viner for eighty pounds—it was well worth an hundred without the frame." This repulse did not daunt the friendly Evelyn —he recommended Gibbons to Sir Christopher Wren, a more competent judge of his merit than the French peddling woman, and he was forthwith employed in the embellishments of Windsor.

Lord Orford classes Lely and May with Evelyn as early patrons of Gibbons, and speaks with much complacency of the attention of the monarch himself. "Charles was too indolent," says the courtly author of the Anecdotes, "to search for genius, and too indiscriminate in his bounty to confine it to merit, but was always pleased when it was brought home to him. He gave the artist a place in the Board of Works, and employed his hand on the ornaments of most taste in his palaces, particularly in the chapel at Windsor, where the simplicity of the carver's foliage at once sets off and atones for the glare of Verrio's painting."* Gibbons was now in a fair way to fame and fortune. He felt the generous kindness of Evelyn, and made him a present of his own bust in wood, carved, it is said, with singular freedom; this work has not survived those dangers to which the nature of the material exposed it. Those who labour in wood, like those who labour in gold or in silver, commit their hopes of fame to a most

This allegorical progeny of Verrio long continued to startle the devout and afford merriment to the witty; the good taste of his present majesty has lately consigned them to oblivion, but unfortunately the carved accompaniments could not be separated, and shared the doom of the paintings.

deceitful foundation, and need not hope to survive in their works. The carving which first drew Evelyn's attention to Gibbons, remained for some time with Sir G. Viner, and finally took sanctuary at Cannons, the far-famed residence of the Duke of Chandos; the head of the amiable patron found a scarcely less eminent abode—it was long seen in the house of Evelyn, in Dover Street.

At this period, and for many centuries before, the art of architectural enrichment was much encouraged; and as men of genius were employed, it was everywhere bold, lavish, even magnificent. Flowers, stems, leaves, fruits, were carved in continuous borders and entablatures, and thrown upon the walls and projections with a profusion which embellished but did not overwhelm the architecture, and with a freedom and a variety equalled only by nature. In those days the artist who embellished the interior of a mansion brought a painter's eye to the task: he was not afraid of erring against the rules of sober and severe decoration deduced from the Greek temples. It is otherwise now. All is at present bald, bare, and barren; flowers are etched, not carved—and birds can no longer build and bring forth, as of old, amidst the flowers, festoons, and deep enrichments of the entablatures. Since the genius of Gibbons was withdrawn, the interior splendour of our churches and palaces has suffered an eclipse. We cannot indeed expect, without the revival of the true Gothic, or the picturesque and classic style of Vanburgh, that architectural enrichment will ever be with us what it has been. The grandeur of the Gothic admitted such embellishments, even to

excess—figures of men, angels, birds and beasts, were mingled freely with fruits, leaves, flowers; yet all was subordinate to the architecture and in keeping with the character of the whole edifice. The expense would indeed be excessive in these times of ours: nothing less than a princely outlay could restore the original Gothic with all those jewels of carving and sculpture, in the absence of which our modern imitations look so mean and naked.

Though the king received Gibbons and his works with little courtesy at first, the recommendation of Evelyn and the good opinion of Wren had their weight in time. At Windsor he carved that fine pedestal in marble, on which the equestrian statue of Charles was placed, and complimented his royal patron on his skill in naval architecture, by introducing implements of navigation amongst the fruits and flowers with which the work is embellished. Under the statue, Sir Samuel Morland, ancestor of Morland the painter, contrived an engine for raising water; on the hoof of the horse is cast Josias Ibach Stada, Bremensis. The skill displayed in forming the horse and rider was more than matched by the splendid carving below, and the work of Stada was considered by many besides Horace Walpole, as a sign to draw the eye of a passenger to the pedestal. The pedestal of the Charing Cross statue is from the same hand, and has been much admired for the beauty of its proportions, as well as for the elegance and boldness of its carvings. The ornamental part is nevertheless common-place. The Windsor pedestal belongs to the line of Stuart—that of Charing Cross

would suit any statue of corresponding proportions. London by no means abounds in public statues of commanding beauty—and there are few pedestals which suit the burthens they bear. The size, the position and character of the figure must dictate the dimensions and projections of the basis —long experience has pointed out this as the only safe and true rule, and Gibbons seems to have found it and followed it.

Having succeeded so admirably in pedestals, the citizens of London imagined that he might be equally successful with a figure, and accordingly commissioned him to execute the statue of Charles the Second for the Royal Exchange. Gibbons seems to have had some misgivings in the matter — not so Mr. Evelyn, who, in 1683, records him in his incomparable diary as without controversy the greatest master, both for invention and rareness of work, that the world had ever possessed; adding, "nor doubt I at all that he will prove as great a master in the statuerie art." But that accomplished man was no safe guide in either painting or sculpture—he imagined that the sprawling gods of Verrio and La Guerre were the most magnificent productions of the muse of painting; and though in carving he was a warm admirer of the picturesque, he had a still stronger rage for very costly workmanship, and conceived that the man who could scatter flowers freely and gracefully over the interior of a palace was a Phidias. How far the opinion of Evelyn and the patronage of the king influenced the decision of the citizens cannot now be known. Gibbons, if he sketched the statue, committed its execution to

one Quellin, of Antwerp; he reserved to himself, however, by means of a license from Charles, the exclusive right of engraving and publishing a print of the statue. This was a strange license, —the "city parliament" would not silently permit any such liberties to be taken with their property in the present day.

The munificence of a certain Tobias Rustat, keeper of Hampton Court, and yeoman of the robes, deserves to be recorded. He presented the two royal brothers (neither of whom had any nice scruples about the matter of receiving gifts from any quarter) with their statues in brass, at the cost of £500 each. The Charles stands in the Hospital at Chelsea—the James, which was the work of Gibbons, at Whitehall. It has great ease of attitude and a certain serenity of air, and is not unworthy of the hand which moulded it, though far below the hopes awakened by the praise of Evelyn. Walpole hesitates to pronounce it the production of Gibbons, though he acknowledges that Vertue met with an agreement between the sculptor and Rustat, for a statue of James, which was finished in 1687. At the time when these works were in hand, the artist resided in the Piazza, Covent Garden; he no longer found it necessary to labour in an obscure cottage in the company of a foreign fiddler—he had assumed the flowing wig and rich dress of the times, and taken the station in society to which his talents entitled him. A bust in bronze, and larger than life, of King James the First, was executed about the same time, and placed over the entrance to Whitehall. This head found its way in the sequel to Windsor Castle, and a very

noble head it is—that is to say, very unlike most of the pictures of the "British Solomon."

Those public works were the forerunners of very extensive employment. "Gibbons made," says Walpole, "a magnificent tomb for Baptist Noel, Viscount Camden, in the church of Exton in Rutlandshire. It cost a thousand pounds, is twenty-two feet high and fourteen wide. There are two figures of him and his lady, and bas-reliefs of their children." But his chief excellence lay in ornamental carving rather than in sculpture, and this seems to have been felt not only by Sir Christopher Wren but by some of the more discerning of the nobility. Those splendid carvings in the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the wooden throne at Canterbury, are of his workmanship: for the latter he received £70, for the former £1,333. 7*s*. 5*d*. The wooden throne was the gift of Archbishop Jamison, and, looking to the quantity of the work, the carver seems to have had a hard bargain. The carvings in St. Paul's choir were probably done by the day rather than by estimate—it is seldom that fractions appear in the commissions of artists. "At Burleigh," observes Walpole, "is a noble profusion of his carving, in picture-frames, chimney-pieces, and door-cases—and the Last Supper, in alto-relief, finely executed. At Chatsworth, where a like taste collected ornaments by the most eminent living masters, are many by Gibbons, particularly in the chapel. In the great anti-chamber are several dead fowl over the chimney finely executed, and over a closet door a pen not distin-

guishable from a real feather. When Gibbons had finished his works in that palace, he presented the duke with a point cravat, a woodcock, and a medal with his own hand, all preserved in a glass case in the gallery."

All the wood-carving in England fades away before that of Gibbons at Chatsworth. The birds seem to live, the foliage to shoot, and the flowers to expand beneath your eye. The most marvellous work of all is a net of game; you imagine at the first glance that the gamekeeper has hung up his day's sport on the wall, and that some of the birds are still in the death-flutter. He richly merited the happy compliment of Walpole: "There is no instance of a man before Gibbons who gave to wood the loose and airy lightness of flowers, and chained together the various productions of the elements with a free disorder natural to each species." He was, however, much assisted at Chatsworth. The designs are from the pencil of Gibbons, and much of the carving too; but there is plenty of proof that the hand of Samuel Watson, a Derbyshire man, was extensively employed under him. Rhodes, in his interesting Peak Scenery, has preserved many of Watson's own *memoranda*, from which it appears that he received, on the 24th of September, 1704, the sum of £342. *5s. 5d.* for carving in wood only —and a still larger sum, at various periods, for working in wood and stone. Some have indeed claimed for him exclusively the fame which belongs to those productions. Of his skill of hand there can be no doubt, nor of the respect which

his works at Chatsworth obtained for his memory. Witness the sorry verses on his tomb:—

> " Watson is gone, whose skilful art displayed
> To the very life whatever nature made:
> View but his wondrous works at Chatsworth-hall,
> Which are so gazed at and admired by all," &c.

In these lines, however, no exclusive claim is set up: but Lysons, in his History of Derbyshire, says, that in the auditor's account of the building of Chatsworth no mention is any where made of Gibbons; and Dallaway, in his edition of Walpole, commenting upon the praise of the Chatsworth carvings in Gilpin, says, " If this criticism were strictly just, what becomes of it when it is proved that Gibbons was never employed at Chatsworth? He in fact introduced the fashion, and had several very able competitors who had studied under him."

Neither the remark of Lysons, however, nor the doubt of Dallaway, seems entitled to much respect. The silence of the auditor's account proves nothing; the paintings of Wilkie, or the sculpture of Chantrey would hardly be mixed up with the measure and value price in the expense of any modern mansion. The head, perhaps, more than the hand of Gibbons was employed, and for this he probably received a round sum, which the noble proprietor omitted in the account. Sir James Thornhill painted, it is true, the hall by the yard. I know not any mode of measuring the wild game and all but growing flowers of Gibbons. Nor to those acquainted with the operations in an artist's studio will the employment of such men as Watson, and Dievot, and Laurens,

appear strange: an eminent sculptor, if largely employed, seeks, and must seek, skilful people to assist in working out and embodying his designs, yet no one will think of attributing to them the just fame of the works thus produced, any more than of dividing the glory of St. Paul's between Sir Christopher Wren and his mason. There can be no doubt that Gibbons was the presiding artist in the embellishments of that princely residence of the Cavendishes. The stamp of his hand is legibly impressed everywhere. Who could have given that buoyant elegance to flowers, and that downy softness to feathers, save himself? Had the real masterpieces of Chatsworth been Watson's, Watson would not have remained in Derbyshire, to lead an obscure life, and be buried with a doggrell epitaph.

Davies, in his View of Derbyshire, published in 1810, says that Gibbons died in consequence of a fall from a scaffold raised to complete the carvings in the chapel of Chatsworth. This is certainly erroneous. His most extensive works, the embellishments of Petworth, are of a later date—he lived for fourteen years after the chapel of Chatsworth was finished. There is much both of uncertainty and inconsistency in what we find related concerning this eminent man; the biographer, in the scanty materials before him, finds assertions which he cannot reconcile, and dates that are contradictory; nor can he embellish the barrenness of his narrative with descriptions of his works; for ornamental sculpture, unlike that which embodies action and sentiment, is exhausted by a few words—the reader wearies of accounts

of dead game, and flowers and garlands, and wishes for intercourse with man. To Evelyn and to Walpole we owe almost all we know, and we must be content with that little all. The latter curious inquirer informs us, that in Thoresby's collection he saw an Elijah under the Juniper Tree, supported by an angel, six inches long and four inches wide, from the chisel of Gibbons, and that he himself had at Strawberry Hill a point cravat from the same hand, the art of which "arrives even at deception." We are informed from other sources that Nahum Tate wrote verses in praise of one of our artist's marble busts; and also of a circumstance still more unfriendly to his fame, that the fire of Chiswick consumed some of the fairest of his works. While stringing together these unconnected things, we may state that at Houghton two chimnies are adorned by Gibbons' foliage; that at Southwick, in Hampshire, there is a whole gallery embroidered in panels by his hand; and that the altar-piece of Trinity College, Oxford, is justly considered one of his happiest works.

Petworth, that celebrated residence of the Lovain-Percys, from whom it has descended to the present munificent Earl of Egremont, rivals Chatsworth in the varied boldness and rich elegance of its ornamental carving. A noble apartment, sixty feet long, twenty-four feet wide, and twenty high, is profusely enriched with carved panels, and corresponding festoons formed of fruits, flowers, shells, birds, and sculptured vases. The splendour of these carvings would make this magnificent room worth a pilgrimage, even were it not also adorned by many exquisite paintings from the

pencils of the first masters. The quantity of ornament is immense, but the quality is equally wonderful. One of the vases thus pendant amongst birds and flowers is of an antique fashion, "with a bas-relief," says Walpole, "of the purest taste, and worthy of the Grecian age of cameos." Whilst these embellishments were in progress, the house caught fire, and Selden, a favourite disciple and assistant of Gibbons, lost his life in saving the festoon which contains that beautiful vase.

It only remains to be related, that in 1714 our artist was appointed Master Carver in wood to George the First, with a salary of eighteen pence per day; that he enjoyed that moderate bounty for seven years—and died at his own house in Bow Street, Covent Garden, on the 3d of August, 1721.

Of the other works of Gibbons there exists no accurate account. The font in St. James's Church, representing Adam and Eve, John the Baptist, and Philip and the Eunuch, was from his hand; and at Stanstead, the seat of the Earl of Halifax, is one of his chimney-pieces, ornamented richly with flowers and antique vases. At his death his collection—and it was not inconsiderable—of pictures, and models, and patterns, was dispersed by auction. "Among other things," says Walpole, "were two chimney-pieces of his own work, the one valued at £100, the other at £120—his own bust in marble by himself, but the wig and cravat extravagant—and an original of Simon, the engraver, by Sir Peter Lely, which had been damaged by the fall of Gibbons's house. There are two different prints of Gibbons by Smith, both fine; the one, with his wife, after Closterman,

the other from a picture at Houghton by Sir Godfrey Kneller, who has shown himself as great in that portrait as the man who sat to him."

Of the personal character of the first of our English sculptors who shall inform us, since contemporary biographers have been silent? We may surmise from the Diary of Evelyn, that he was modest, and remembered acts of kindness; and we may suspect, from the extravagant cravat and pompous wig in which he drest his own bust, that he was a little vain. His portrait by Kneller supports this suspicion: the splendour of the flowing wig, the encumbrance of the robe, and the hands placed for effect and not for labour, may be imputed indeed to the painter; but the bust from his own hand has much of the same conceited and fantastic air. Concerning his numerous pupils not much can be said. The labours of his favourite, Selden, are lost in those of the master, and even the carvings of Watson at Chatsworth must owe much of their excellence to the presiding spirit of Gibbons, with whose own actual handiwork they are intermingled. With him ornamental carving rose to its highest excellence in this country. No one has since approached him in the happy boldness and natural freedom of such productions. Under his chisel stone seemed touched with vegetable life, and wood became as lilies of the valley and fruit from the tree. One may be pardoned for wishing, with such things before us, that architecture would once more condescend to cover its nakedness with an ornamental leaf or two. There is a penury of embellishment in our public edifices. Our architects should remember that it is

only exquisite beauty which can afford to go in plain attire. We miss the massive splendour and picturesque effect of Gibbons's festoons. Our eyes grow weary gazing on naked walls and unadorned entablatures; bald simplicity, in short, has few sincere admirers.

In the grace and elegance of his workmanship, he excelled all artists who preceded as well as those who have followed him; nevertheless, in felicity of grouping, and vivid richness and propriety of application, he was far surpassed by those intrepid artists who embellished our old abbeys and cathedrals. In comparing his works with those Gothic carvings the remark of Gilpin is confirmed, that "Gibbons was no adept at composition;" but in execution he has no rival. There was an impediment in his way, I apprehend, which some men of taste will be reluctant to admit—the Grecian architecture, which he was called upon to enrich, refuses to wear with grace a profusion of garlands; whereas the grove-like stateliness, and harmonious variety of the Gothic, carry fruits and flowers as naturally as trees bear leaf and bloom.



CAIUS GABRIEL CIBBER.

The ready wit and energetic style of the Careless Husband and the Apology, have secured for the name of Cibber a permanent station in our literature; but the poetic statues of Madness and Melancholy had previously crowned it with merited distinction in another department.

Caius Gabriel Cibber, one of those artists whom England, before she addressed her own faculties to sculpture, imported from foreign parts, was son to the cabinet-maker of the King of Denmark. He was by all accounts born at Flensburg, in Holstein, in the year 1630. Of his early history little is related by Vertue,—and Walpole pauses in the midst of praise to censure the son, Colley Cibber, for being silent respecting it. "That singularly pleasing biographer," says Orford, "who has dignified so many trifling anecdotes of players by the expressive energy of his style, has recorded nothing of a father's life, who had so much merit in his profession." He discovered—it is not said at what age—such talent for sculpture, that the King of Denmark sent him, at his own expense, to pursue his studies in Rome. There or elsewhere he acquired much skill in art, and coming to London

not long before the revolution, obtained employment from John, the son of Nicholas Stone, a name very favourably mentioned amongst the artists of those days. A sculptor in the times of the Stuarts took rank with architects and masons, and the three employments were sometimes united in one person. It was considered as an art expressly decorative or monumental, and in both characters was subordinate to architecture.

How long Cibber continued in the employment of Stone we are not told; that he behaved worthily there can be no doubt, for he was made his foreman—a place of much labour and little dignity, and on his master's being struck with the palsy in Holland, he was sent by the family to conduct him home. There is no record at what period he commenced his career as an artist on his own account,—even his name has been insulted by the accompaniment of an alias. It has been written Cibert, and one well skilled in the northern languages has assured me that this is the more probable name. Like Hogarth or Opie, he might desire to soften a harsh termination. Whatever might have been the practice of the family in Denmark, both father and son wrote the name as it now stands.

When he left Stone, and commenced sculptor for himself, he removed to a spacious house in Southampton Street, and was soon very extensively employed. His residence at Rome, and the general favour extended to classic subjects by the directors of public taste during the reign of the last of the Stuarts, induced Cibber to carve allegories and gods; he performed for the vista and

the grove what Thornhill and La Guerre did for the ceilings and the walls. Neptune with his Tritons appeared in the midst of the pond—Diana and her Nymphs in the recesses of the grove—Venus adorned some shady arbour—and Minerva or Apollo watched by the portico. All this was very picturesque and was conceived to be classical: to scatter gods and goddesses, and fauns with cloven heels, at due distances about groves and lawns,

> " Homer, Cæsar, and Nebucadnezar,
> All standing naked in the open air,"

was, according to the creed of the time, to work in the spirit of Athens.

It was in this fashion that Cibber wrought at Chatsworth, the magnificent residence of the first Duke of Devonshire. He sought to revive the scenes of classic romance, where gods and groves, fauns and fountains, nymphs and temples mingle in splendid and voluptuous confusion. The natural beauty of Chatsworth is great — on one side rolls a fine river, on the other rises abrupt and high a vast range of hill and wood—behind are scattered immense masses of rock, while in the front are " dropt in nature's careless haste" many hundreds of large oaks which were growing there during the wars of the roses. The mansion itself is a splendid one—adorned, as we have stated in the life of Gibbons, with carvings of high merit—and filled with fine paintings and statues and books. In the wild forest which overhangs the house, Cibber found a fitting refuge for his works. He built a little temple, half seen half

hid, in the grove, introduced a fountain, which, on touching a spring, spouted an inundation from column and floor, that, uniting into one stream, went rolling over an enormous flight of steps, and flowed within a quoit-cast of the mansion, when it sunk and disappeared in a concealed channel. Among these groves and temples and fountains were scattered plentifully the deities and demi-deities of Cibber, all cut in free stone, a material in which he delighted, as it yielded readily to the chisel, and enabled him to keep pace with the impatience of his customers. Much of this is mutilated now or destroyed; but the whole was once reckoned beautiful, and over the mystery of its fountains, and the classic elegance of its groves and goddesses, both learned and noble have

"Wondered with a foolish face of praise."

In a climate so humid and variable, all these enchantments of our sculptor must, for at least one half of the year, have looked in no small degree ludicrous. To see barefooted nymphs and naked goddesses amidst the forest when the leaf was on the tree and the flower in full bloom, was startling enough; but when the wind howled over bare branches, ice-bound streams, and snow mid-leg deep, it was another affair. The barren and severe reality of the scene was at variance with the fiction. The bird chattering on the naked thorn, and the deer digging the frozen snow for herbage, were, truly, accompaniments for Venus and the Graces! Of Cibber's works at Chatsworth, few now remain, save those attached to the building—

time and change of taste have been fatal to his free-stone goddesses.

Those who wish minute information concerning the cost of individual statues, which can no longer be seen, may turn to Walpole and Lysons. "We find," says the latter, "from Cibber's receipts, that he was engaged, in 1688, and that he received on the whole £310 down to December 1690, after which time it does not appear that he was employed. In a volume of the artist's receipts now at Hardwicke Hall, is the following memorandum of prices in his own hand:—" For two figures in the pediment, each of them four tons of stone, £140 for both; for a round statue with a boy on his shoulder, £60; for two dogs, £8 each; for twelve Cæsar's heads, £5 a piece; my Lord Kingston did after this pay for board and wine for me and my man. For two statues as big as life I had £35 a piece, and all charges borne; and at this rate I shall endeavour to serve a nobleman in free-stone." These prices are small though the material is soft; but the sculptor appears even more than satisfied. It is probable that the figures were wrought without models. To make an exact copy of a statue was in those days rendered laborious from the inferiority of the instruments by which the model was imitated in stone or marble. The improvements of Bacon and the recent inventions of Chantrey have taken away the appearance of magic from the preparatory rough hewing of a statue.

Like Gibbons, his compeer, Cibber was employed by the government. He embellished the fire monument with bas-reliefs—he ornamented

the fountain in Soho Square, and he carved one of those splendid vases in the Garden of Hampton Court. This last work, tradition says, was made in rivalry with another artist—Valadier by name, a Frenchman, who executed the companion vase. Sculptors of skill and antiquaries of taste have in vain endeavoured to determine which is the work of Cibber—the vases are both beautiful, and the sculpture remains sharp and uninjured, owing in a great degree to the projection of the hollow lip, which has sheltered it from the shower. It was the fashion then—and one may wish it were so still—to scatter vases about the garden grounds and lawns of our palaces and noble mansions. Cibber was likewise employed in carving the statues of the kings which embellish or encumber the Royal Exchange. He wrought down as far as King Charles, and added the figure of Sir Thomas Gresham in the piazza beneath. On works such as these, criticism is generally merciful—they are known to be commissions of a nature in which the spirit of the artist could have taken little interest. He was much noticed by Sir Christopher Wren, and carved at his request the phœnix in bas-relief which appears above the southern door of St. Paul's Cathedral. It is eighteen feet long and nine feet wide, and the projection is bold—he received for it one hundred pounds.

It was the wish of Cibber, and other cutters of stone of his time, to revive the love for classic subjects; or, in other words, to awaken the public taste for a class of works which, without general learning, no modern people could either feel or un-

derstand. The love for productions of that nature, introduced by the Romans, had been thoroughly extinguished many ages before. Those universal conquerors built from Dover to the Frith of Forth temples for their gods, courts of justice for their judges, and mansions for their chief leaders. They paved the floors with mosaic, ornamented the walls with paintings, and erected statues of the emperors whom they served and the gods whom they worshipped. But those works, though numerous, were, if we may judge by the reliques dispersed in our collections, very far from excellent. Flaxman conjectures that the rude hands of the legionaries themselves were employed in the manufacture—for it can be called no better—of the statues, &c. in question: at best their execution must have been entrusted to such inferior workmen as provincial prices and fame could tempt from Italy. To make a coarse copy of a fine original seems to have been all that art aspired to accomplish in Roman Britain. When the sinking empire withdrew its legions, something of the Roman attachment to sculpture seems to have lingered behind with the barbarians. Speed, the historian, states, "that King Cadwollo being buried in St. Martin's Church, near Ludgate, his image, great and terrible, triumphantly riding on horseback, artificially cast in brass, was placed on the western gate of the city, to the fear and terror of the Saxons." "We must not, however, understand," observes Flaxman, "from this bold and poetical description of Cadwollo's statue, that its expression was the result of its excellence. If it was terrible as well as great, that characteristic was the consequence

of its barbarous workmanship; for, in 677, the Goths, Franks, Lombards, and other uncivilized nations, had nearly extinguished the liberal arts in Europe." This terrific King Cadwollo was probably of the same grotesque character of art with those city frights, the Gog and Magog of the Common Council Room.

Cadwollo and his race sunk before the Saxons and Danes, whose repeated invasions and innumerable battles extinguished all that merited the name of sculpture in Britain. The gods of the Romans gave place to a new progeny of idols; and were heard of no more till the great restoration of learning, coeval with the invention of printing. This recalled from oblivion the deities of whom Homer and Virgil sung—whom Apelles painted, and Phidias carved. Opulent noblemen now collected from foreign lands many fine antique groups and statues and busts, and exhibited them publicly: travellers multiplied splendid accounts of the Italian galleries, and every poet's verse bore a burthen of goddesses and gods. The nation, in truth, had feasted to surfeiting with the apostles, saints, and madonnas of the Romish church, and desired a change of fare. The talent and the education of Cibber fitted him admirably for swimming along with the current of public taste. He had studied the gods of the heathen at Rome—he knew they were ready created to his hand without any outlay of thought; and, though when the call for originality came he was not found deficient, he no doubt reckoned it the wisest course to continue this classic manufacture so long as there was a demand for it in the market.

In those days British collectors preferred indifferent copies of fine originals to all the attempts which living artists could make at originality. This did less harm than artists are willing to allow—it spread a love of art throughout the land—it made many acquainted with its aspect who were strangers to it before, and it placed before the eyes of our native sculptors the sublime conceptions at least of the most eminent of the old masters. But this was all it could do; and when once a few galleries were filled with those servile copies, the manufacture should have been discontinued, and native genius employed in creations of its own. Cibber, however, took taste as he found it; he opened his manufactory of Venuses and Dianas, and accommodating himself to the pockets, as he had done to the fancy, of his customers, he wrought in a cheap material, and vindicated his choice by averring that fine conception and skilful workmanship could consecrate freestone. Our raw and inhospitable atmosphere was soon found to wage a destructive war with this fragile race of divinities. We have the evidence of the marbles of Minerva's temple in favour of the long endurance of sculpture in the fine climate of Greece. But the rain, the haze, the hail, and the snow of our island strips off the external beauty even of marble in a few seasons, and with the outward grace much that the many admire sculpture for has departed. So it fared with Cibber's labours in groves and gardens—patrons were taught prudence by experience—and our sculpture now no longer courts the open air, but seeks shelter in galleries or takes sanctuary in the church. Nature says, that art can never be to Britain what it was of old to Greece.

Whilst labouring at works of this description, Cibber became a widower. His first wife—no one mentions her name or country—died young; his second wife, who came of the ancient family of Cowley, or Colley, in Rutlandshire, brought him a portion of six thousand pounds, and in 1671 bore him a son—the well-known and witty Laureate, Colley Cibber—whose autobiography alone would be sufficient to rescue his memory from the ferocious injustice of the Dunciad. "By this alliance," says Dallaway, in his valuable notes on Walpole, "his children were kinsmen of William of Wickham, and, on that foundation, one of them —afterwards a fellow of New College, and remarkable for his wit—was admitted of Winchester College, in consideration of which the father carved and gave to the society a statue of their founder." Cibber appears to have been wealthy and munificent; "he built," says Walpole, "the Danish Church in London, and was buried there himself, with his second wife, for whom a monument was erected in 1696."

The works on which the claim of Cibber to the honours of original genius entirely depend, are the far-famed figures of Madness and Melancholy, carved for the chief entrance to Moorfields. They are the earliest indications of the appearance of a distinct and natural spirit in sculpture, and stand first in conception and only second in execution among all the productions of the island. Those who see them for the first time are fixed to the spot with terror and awe; an impression is made on the heart never to be removed; nor is the impression of a vulgar kind. The poetry of those

terrible infirmities is embodied; from the degradation of the actual madhouse we turn overpowered and disgusted, but from those magnificent creations we retire in mingled awe and admiration. I remember some eighteen or twenty years ago, when an utter stranger in London, I found myself, after much wandering, in the presence of those statues, then occupying the entrance to Moorfields. Sculpture was to me at that time an art unknown, and it had to force its excellence upon my mind, without the advantage of any preparation either through drawings or descriptions. But I perceived the meaning of those statues at once, felt the pathetic truth of the delineation, and congratulated myself on having discovered a new source of enjoyment. The impression which they made upon me induced me to expect too much from the rest of our sculpture. In St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, I found much finer work, but less fervour of poetic sentiment, than what Cibber had stamped upon those rough stones, which he is said to have cut at once from the block without the aid of models.

Wonderful as those works are, their poetic excellence appealed in vain to one of our best poets. Pope's lines, in his satire on Colley Cibber, will occur to the recollection of every reader—

> "Where o'er the gates, by his famed father's hand,
> Great Cibber's brazen brainless brothers stand."

Walpole does not quote them without lamenting the injustice and the peevish weakness of the poet. Colley himself—if we may believe the sarcastic commentary of Warburton—" remonstrated, be-

cause his brothers at Bedlam were not brazen, but blocks; yet it passed unaltered," says the benevolent divine, "as this no ways altered the relationship." Flaxman, a more weighty authority in matters of sculpture, seems to have been somewhat infected with the notions of the poet and the bishop. In concluding his lecture on English Sculpture, he mentions Cibber "and the mad figures on the piers of Bedlam gates;" had he appreciated them, he would have used other language. But public opinion will, in the end, bear down all solitary authorities, however eminent; and in this case it has been pretty strongly expressed for an hundred and thirty years.

Lord Byron, in discussing his own claims to originality as a poet, which some peevish critic had questioned, takes up the sarcastic complaint of the wisest of men, that there is nothing new under the sun. There are persons of taste and learning who imagine no work of genius worthy of their praise unless they perceive in it some visible traces of productions of old standing in the world's esteem; wanting strength of mind to comprehend what is original, they can only measure by the standard of other men's excellence; and the sculptor who challenges their notice through a shadowy resemblance to Michael Angelo, or some other established divinity, has a better chance than if he depended upon any new impulse. Of all who have sought out a resemblance to elder works in the Madness and Melancholy of Cibber, the most laborious is Mr. Dallaway. "The Dying Gladiator," he says, without any hesitation, "suggested the design of those two figures of maniacs, as far

as attitude—or perhaps the Slaves of Michael Angelo, or the Torso and Hercules Farnese, for a general idea of muscular expression. The position of the figures is evidently borrowed from that of the Duke Guiliano de Medici at Florence, by Michael Angelo, personifying Day and Night." It is not easy to reply to such sweeping conjectures as these. With a man of an original turn of mind it is always easier to create than to borrow, and for those two figures the artist had models at hand; he had only to open the wards of Bedlam, and there in their straw sat Raving Madness and Moody Melancholy. Even the ingenious critic himself, for the purpose perhaps of undermining his own theory, tells us, on the authority of the Description of London, that one of the statues was the portrait of Oliver Cromwell's giant porter, then in Bedlam. Wherever Cibber found the postures, the sentiment is original and unborrowed. As those figures are carved in Portland stone, exposure in the open air for upwards of an hundred years had harmed them somewhat, and the governors, when the New Bedlam in St. George's Fields was built, placed them under the chisel of the younger Bacon, to have the surface restored. From this dangerous experiment they escaped into their new sanctuary, and are now safe, it is to be hoped, from the injuries of the elements and the profaning hands of modern restorers.

" Cibber, the statuary," says Walpole, " was carver to the king's closet, and died about 1700, aged seventy. His son had a portrait of him by old Laroon, with a medal in his hand. I have one in water-colours, with a pair of compasses, by

Christian Richter; probably a copy from the former, with a slight variation. What is wanting in circumstances is more than compensated by his works. The most capital are the two figures of Melancholy and Raving Madness before the front of Bedlam."

Brief and imperfect as this sketch may appear, I have now related all that is known concerning the works or the personal history of Gabriel Cibber, who must be regarded as the forerunner, at least, of whatever is poetic in the sculpture of Great Britain.



LOUIS FRANCIS ROUBILIAC.

When D'Argenville in 1787 drew up his Lives of the most eminent Sculptors of France, he omitted the name of Roubiliac, for which no other cause has been assigned, than that he was known to the world through his English works alone, and had performed nothing for the decoration of his native land. There is the more reason that he should be attended to here; but in truth he needs no subsidiary title to all the distinction which a narrative of his life and a critical account of his works can give, for he was a genius and a gentleman.

Of the incidents of his story little more is on record than what we find by Walpole, who seems to deserve in this instance the reproach of negligence; for at the time when he was composing his Anecdotes, the works of this sculptor were widely known—his fame was high—and his memory must have been fresh in a thousand recollections. The courtly biographer has satisfied himself with a few leading facts, and left his early life and studies unexplored. Much traditional matter concerning Roubiliac still lingers about our London studios; but all stories of that class require to be received with caution; and in interweaving oral information with the anecdotes of

Orford, I shall keep this rule before me. Roubiliac was born, by all accounts, at Lyons — it is generally supposed about the year 1695; studied under Balthazar of Dresden, sculptor to the Elector of Saxony; and came to London in 1720, when he was twenty-five years old. Of his parents I have never heard any account—but it is likely that they were respectable—for he had obtained a fair education, and was well acquainted with the literature of his native land. His knowledge of the best French poets I have heard described as extensive; and, indeed, some of his own short poems in that tongue are still remembered. He never mastered English so as to converse in it with readiness and elegance; and in most of the anecdotes which I have heard of him he is introduced as using that kind of broken dialect which is common to foreigners here.

Of the occasion of his coming to London, we have two accounts; one written, the other oral. The first alleges merely the known wealth of England, and the encouragement which was then held out in this country to foreign sculptors of even very moderate talents: the second is more circumstantial. An English traveller, says the legend, happened to be strolling through a town in France—when his attention was casually attracted by some clay-sketches of a poetic nature in the humble studio of a young and nameless artist: he admired them—took the sculptor's address—and continued his journey. Some time—years it is said—passed on, when a friend requested the traveller's advice concerning a monument of value which he proposed to raise—

the merits of the living artists were discussed—the sculptor of Lyons was recalled to memory—an invitation was given—promises were made, and Roubiliac came over. Some have pronounced the circumstance of his working in the studies of Carter and Cheere to be inconsistent with this latter account—but I cannot perceive that the fact in question throws any discredit upon the tale. One monument could not be sufficient to occupy the whole time of an ardent young artist, and what could he do better than lend his hand to other sculptors, till he had the fortune to obtain full employment on his own account? Rysbrach, a sculptor of some talent, at that time enjoyed the patronage of London, and years probably elapsed—as sculpture is of slow growth—before the new candidate succeeded in establishing his name. Lord Orford indeed informs us, that he had little business till Sir Edward Walpole recommended him to execute half the busts in Trinity College, Dublin—but he has neglected to give the date of this act of kindness.

The patronage of Sir Edward Walpole arose from another cause than a mere appreciation of the artist's talents, if we credit a story related by Sir Joshua Reynolds,—respecting which, Orford, in enumerating the generous acts of his relation, has been suspiciously silent. "Of Roubiliac," says Northcote, "it is a pleasing circumstance to record that his own goodness of heart first brought his abilities into notice, and that his great success in life seems to have depended in some degree on his honest and liberal conduct soon after he came to England. At that time he was merely working as

a journeyman to a person of the name of Carter; and the young artist having spent an evening at Vauxhall, on his return picked up a pocket-book, which he discovered, on examining it at his lodgings, to contain a considerable number of Bank notes, together with some papers apparently of consequence to the owner. He immediately advertised the circumstance, and a claimant soon appeared, who was so pleased with the integrity of the youth, and so struck with his genius—of which he showed several specimens—that he not only, being a man of rank and fortune, gave him a handsome remuneration, but also promised to patronize him through life, and faithfully performed that promise."

The owner of the pocket-book was Sir Edward Walpole, and according to the tradition of the profession, all the recompense which he could persuade Roubiliac to receive was the present of a fat buck annually. This yearly present speaks not only of the gentlemanly pride of the artist, but of an establishment beyond the mark of a mere journeyman who had no higher income than his weekly wages. Some confusion has crept in amongst the authorities which I have consulted. The account given by Smith, who had it from his father, one of Roubiliac's pupils, assists but little. "I find," says he, in the life of Nollekens, "from a manuscript in my father's handwriting, that M. Roubiliac owed his introduction to Mr. Jonathan Tyers to his friend Cheere, with whom he worked before he ventured upon his own account. It happened in the following manner. At the time Mr. Tyers had engaged in the Vauxhall-Gardens speculation he requested

the advice of M. Cheere as to the best mode of decoration. I conclude you will have music, observed Cheere, therefore you cannot do better than have a carving of an Apollo—now what do you say to a figure of Handel? Good! replied Jonathan, but that will be too expensive, friend Cheere. No, answered the sculptor, for I have an uncommonly clever fellow working for me now, and introduced to me by Sir Edward Walpole—employ him, and he will produce you a fine statue. This he did; and the following copy of a receipt will at once prove the kind way in which he assisted him:—'June the 9th, 1750. I promise to pay to Jona. Tyers twenty pounds on demand, value received.'" By jumbling transactions of very different dates together, this biographer has made confusion worse confounded. The statue in question was the work of a much earlier period than 1750. In 1732 Tyers was busy embellishing Vauxhall, and Hogarth and Cheere were both employed professionally in the improvements; and to this period I am disposed to assign the appearance of the statue of Handel. It certainly stood in the Vauxhall Gardens as early as the year 1744.

The studio in which Roubiliac commenced on his own account was in Peter's Court, St. Martin's Lane—a favourite haunt of artists: the room has since been pulled down and rebuilt, and is now occupied as a meeting-house by the Society of Friends.

In the life of Gibbons I have related the history of ornamental carving—and in that of Cibber described the appearance of that sculpture which was called classical. I have now to speak of the monu-

mental and historical species of art introduced—or rather countenanced and supported by Roubiliac. He was a reformer, who gave powerful assistance in abolishing the literal fidelity of sculpture, and establishing in its stead the poetic personations of sentiment and feeling. How he succeeded on his part, the narrative of his life will show—but it is necessary to pause for a moment on the character and merits of the style which he aided in overthrowing, before we attempt to estimate the excellence of his own.

Sepulchral statues and figures of saints and apostles made their appearance among us soon after the Norman conquest; the sculpture in the west door of Rochester Cathedral is ascertained to be as old as the reign of Henry the First; and the far superior ornaments at Wells were executed under the superintendence of Bishop Josceline, in 1242.

"The west front of this church," says Flaxman,* "equally testifies the piety and comprehension of the bishop's mind. The sculpture presents the noblest, most useful, and interesting subjects possible to be chosen. On the south side, above the west door, are alto-relievos of the creation in its different parts—the deluge, and important acts of the patriarchs. There are many compositions in Italy of the Almighty creating Eve, by Giotti, Ghiberti, and Michael Angelo; this is certainly the oldest, and not inferior to any. Companions to those on the north side are alto-relievos of the principal circumstances in the life of our Saviour. Above these are two rows of statues, larger than nature, of kings, queens, and nobles—patrons of

* Lectures, p. 13.

the church, saints, bishops, and other religious, from its first foundation till the time of Henry the Third. Near the pediment is our Saviour coming to Judgment, attended by angels and his twelve apostles. The upper arches on each side, along the whole of the west front, and continued in the north and south ends, are occupied by figures rising from their graves, strongly expressing the hope, fear, astonishment, stupefaction, or despair, inspired by the presence of the Lord and Judge of the world in that awful moment. In speaking of the execution of such a work, due regard must be paid to the circumstances under which it was produced, in comparison with those of our own times. There were neither prints nor printed books to assist the artist; the sculptor could not be instructed in anatomy, for there were no anatomists. Some knowledge of optics and a glimmering of perspective were reserved for the researches of so sublime a genius as Roger Bacon some years afterwards. A small knowledge of geometry and mechanics was exclusively confined to two or three learned monks in the whole country, and the principles of those sciences, as applied to the figure and motion of man, and inferior animals, were known to none! Therefore this work is necessarily ill drawn and deficient in principle, and much of the sculpture is rude and severe; yet in parts there is a beautiful simplicity, an irresistible sentiment, and sometimes a grace, excelling more modern productions."

"It is very remarkable," continues this great sculptor, "that Wells Cathedral was finished in 1242, two years after the birth of Cimabue, the

restorer of Painting in Italy, and the work was going on at the same time that Nicolo Pisano, the Italian restorer of sculpture, exercised the art in his own country; it was also finished forty-six years before the Cathedral of Amiens, and thirty-six years before the Cathedral of Orvieto was begun, and it seems to be the first specimen of such magnificent and varied sculpture united in a series of sound history that is to be found in western Europe. The style both of the sculpture and architecture is wholly different from the Tombs of Edward the Confessor and Henry the Third, which were by Italian artists."

The long and triumphant reign of Edward the First was less favourable to arts than to arms. Yet the sculptured crosses in honour of Queen Eleanor were of great beauty, and three of them are still entire—those of Northampton, Geddington, and Waltham. "The monument," says Flaxman,* "of Aylmer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, in Westminster Abbey, is a specimen of the magnificence of such works in the age we are speaking of; the loftiness of the work, the number of arches and pinnacles, the lightness of the spires, the richness and profusion of foliage and crockets, the solemn repose of the principal statue representing the deceased in his last prayer for mercy at the throne of grace, the delicacy of thought in the group of angels bearing the soul, and the tender sentiment of concern variously expressed in the relations ranged in order round the basement, forcibly arrest the attention, and carry the thoughts not only to other ages, but other states of existence. . . . . Of various works in the reign of

* Flaxman's Lectures, p. 19.

Henry the Sixth, three merit particular notice. The first is the Resurrection, over the door of All Souls' College, in Oxford, with a statue of the King on one side, and one of Archbishop Chichely on the other—there is purity of character and grace, and delicacy of workmanship in the statue of the monarch — the Resurrection has been sorely defaced. The second is an arch in Westminster Abbey, adorned with upwards of fifty statues. The centre group, on the north side, represents the coronation of Henry V.; the lines of figures on each side are his nobles attending the ceremony. On the south face of the arch the central object is the king on horseback, armed cap-a-pie, riding full speed, attended by the companions of his expedition. The sculpture is bold and characteristic, the equestrian group is furious and warlike, the standing figures have a natural sentiment in their actions, and simple grandeur in their draperies, such as we admire in the paintings of Raphael. The third of these works is the monument of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, in St. Mary's Church, Warwick; a gilt bronze figure of the earl in the act of prayer, lies on a richly ornamented marble pedestal, round which are several beautiful small gilt bronze statues, standing in niches, supporting canopies over them. The figures are so natural and graceful, the architecture so rich and delicate, that they are excelled by nothing done in Italy of the same kind at this time, although Donatello and Ghiberti were living when this tomb was executed, in the year 1439. The mason was Thomas Essex—the sculptor was William Austin, of London."

The Lady Chapel in Westminster is the last magnificent specimen of Gothic sculpture erected in England. It was built by Henry VII. to receive his tomb—and the tomb and chapel were worthy of each other. They were the united work of English and Italian artists, and exhibited once, it is said, the marvellous number of three thousand statues. "Even at this day," observes Flaxman, "the number is very great, and it is another example of the astonishing estimation and employment of sculpture in this kingdom before the Reformation. It appears that Torrigiana, a sculptor of eminence, was employed about six years upon the tomb, while the chapel, with all its carvings and statues, was confided to the hands of Englishmen. The architecture of the tomb was a mixture of Roman arches and decoration, very different from the arches of the chapel, which are all pointed; the figures of the tomb have a better proportion and drawing in the naked than those of the chapel; but the figures of the chapel are very superior in natural simplicity and grandeur of character and drapery." This distinction between Italian and English art still holds. The former is more beautiful in its drawing and just in its proportions—the latter excels in sentiment and feeling, and in natural dignity.

Sculpture was to Gothic architecture what the blossom is to the leaf. It was subordinate indeed to the masonry—or rather the conception of the whole was so much the effort of one mind, that the sculpture seemed tame when removed from the consecrated recesses, and the architecture without it appeared deprived of its chief grace. Proces-

sions of pilgrims, groups of saints, figures of apostles, devout kings, warriors laid on the bier, ladies praying surrounded by their kneeling children, the hopes of the good and the fears of the bad, were all sculptured and shown forth as lessons in virtue to the illiterate and the barbarous. There were no colossal statues nor enormous monuments of fantastic sculpture and architecture, showing the heavens above and the earth beneath in variegated marble, to break the unity and disturb the melancholy splendour of the edifice. It is true that the genius of the artist sometimes made its escape from gravity into the mirthful and the ludicrous, and amused itself with scattering strange figures, such as the herald's office loves to deal in, among the darker nooks and deep foliages of the building. The sculptor seems to have been sometimes haunted with visions, such as appeared in "Alloway's auld haunted kirk." Imps and devils, of all shapes and sizes, are tumbling in merriment or in misery, half seen, half hid, among the redundant fruits and flowers of bands, capitals, and cornices.

There was much beauty, no doubt, and much simplicity of style in some of our gothic monuments and religious sculptures; but it would be in vain to disguise the fact which the enthusiasm of Flaxman scarcely conceals, that the best were but literal transcripts of life, uninformed by poetic sentiment, and unembellished with the graces of good workmanship. It would be idle to seek among those gothic creations for works, which, when separated from their columns or niches, could be placed side by side with the poetic statues and groups of Greece and Rome. They are to

be looked upon as members of one fair and magnificent creation—lovely when united, but losing their beauty when torn asunder and scattered. It is otherwise with the sculpture of the Greeks—it was never the handmaid of architecture—it asserted and maintained its independence, and hence its noblest works stand alone and incomparable. In England our architects long preserved their ascendency, and as late as the middle of the last century dictated to sculptors with a boldness of which we have no notion now-a-days, and which most probably was only tolerated then because our figure-makers were poor friendless foreigners.

Such was the state of our monumental sculpture when Roubiliac made his appearance—a man of poetic feeling—well acquainted with the marble miracles of the sculptors of old—of unbounded enthusiasm—and who devoutly believed the maker of a fine statue to be the noblest of all God's creatures. To the usual bustle and liveliness of his national temperament, he added, in his personal demeanour, a peculiar abundance of the ecstatic; he would drop his knife and fork in the very presence of Walpole's smoking haunch—fall back in his chair—roll his eyes, writhe his face, clasp his hands in joy, and, springing from the table, hurry into his studio, to grapple at once with the design, which had been so ungracious as to appear to his fancy at meal-time. These fits, which oftener imply weakness than strength, were regarded by the world as signs that a true poetic spirit had made its appearance in sculpture. He now rose rapidly into reputation. Nothing could be more unlike the gothic monuments which pre-

ceded his, than the works which were destined to supplant them. The former were stiff, formal, calm, and devout; the latter were all action and flutter—the postures generally violent, and the expression strained. The former were too full of death—and inspired less of devout awe than of aversion and horror—every thing about them called up the grave and the canker-worm; while the latter were much too lively and spirited—they talked of the grave only in the inscriptions—they were over-informed with motion—the men seemed all resolved to speak, and the women to dance. More life in the one, and more sobriety in the other, would have been better.

The first work which can with certainty be ascribed to Roubiliac is that statue of Handel, made for Vauxhall Gardens, which we have already mentioned. He wished to give a lively transcript of the living man, and he fully accomplished what he undertook. He has exhibited the eminent composer in the act of rapturous meditation when the music had fully wakened up his soul. His gladness of face and agitation of body tell us, that the sculptor imagined Handel's finest strains to have been conceived amidst contortions worthy of the Cumean Sybil. Though every button of his dress seems to have sat for its likeness, and every button-hole is finished with the fastidiousness of a fashionable tailor, the clothes are infected with the agitation of the man, and are in staring disorder. They seem to have been thrown on to meet the sudden exigency of some random fit of inspiration—his waistcoat is half-unbuttoned—the knees of his breeches are loose—his hair is in

motion, and he seems more like a man agitated by an apparition than one influenced by the spirit of melody. Yet with all these blemishes—and they are serious ones—there is a pleasing air of life and reality about the figure. It cannot fail to offend severe taste—but it will always be a prime favourite with those—and how many are they? —who desire no more from sculpture than a facsimile of the real man—

"Whose accuracy all men durst swear for."

Nor has it wanted its warm admirers among artists. Nollekens, who loved to talk in round numbers, said, it was well worth a thousand guineas. The price which the sculptor was paid for it I have never heard named. It did not remain long at Vauxhall, but the cause of its removal has not been stated. "It stood," says Smith, "in 1744, on the south side of the gardens, under an enclosed lofty arch, surmounted by a figure playing the violoncello, attended by two boys; and it was then screened from the weather by a curtain, which was drawn up when the visitors arrived. The ladies then walked in these and Mary-le-bone Gardens, in their hoops, sacques, and caps, as they appeared in their own drawing-rooms; whilst the gentlemen were generally uncovered, with their hats under their arms, and swords and bags. The statue, after being moved to various situations in the gardens, was at length conveyed to the house of Mr. Barrett, of Stockwell, and from thence to the entrance hall of the residence of his son, the Rev. Mr. Barrett, Duke Street, Westminster." From Mr. Barrett's hands the statue found its way, after

various vicissitudes of fortune, to a house in Dean Street, where it lately awaited a fresh purchaser. The model of this statue stood long in the gallery of Hudson, the painter, at Twickenham—it was purchased at his death for five pounds, by Nollekens; and when death dispersed his collection also, it was consigned by an auctioneer to Hamlet the silversmith, for the sum of ten guineas.

The order in which the works of Roubiliac were executed cannot be accurately ascertained, neither are we sure who had the honour of first patronizing him. It is said, that, through the influence of Sir Edward Walpole the monument in memory of John, Duke of Argyle and Greenwich, was confided to his hands. The design is a splendid conceit—the noble warrior and orator is stretched out and expiring at the foot of a pyramid, on which History is writing his actions, while Minerva looks mournfully on, and Eloquence deplores his fall. The common allegorical materials of other monuments are here. Even History is inscribing a conceit—she has written *John Duke of Argyle and Gr*—there she pauses and weeps. There is a visible want of unity in the action, and in this work at least he merits the reproach of Flaxman, that "he did not know how to combine figures together so as to form an intelligible story." Yet no one, before or since, has shown finer skill in rendering his figures individually excellent. Argyle indeed seems reluctant to die, and History is a little too theatrical in her posture; but all defects are forgotten in looking at the figure of Eloquence, with her supplicating hand and earnest brow.

I have heard sculptors of high name accuse this statue of Eloquence of being much too theatrical; and it cannot be denied that she is in violent motion, and seems pouring out a torrent of words. But what is to be done in allegory? Eloquence is no silent divinity, and if she is to be represented motionless and mute, how shall Silence be sculptured? Walpole says, "the statue of Eloquence is very masterly and graceful." Canova was struck with its beauty—he stood before it full ten minutes—muttered his surprize in his native language—passed on, and returning in a few minutes, said, "That is one of the noblest statues I have seen in England." If the sculpture can be reproached with being too vigorous and active, the poetry of the inscription makes ample amends; it is not only dull—it is dead. It was written by Paul Whitehead, and came recommended by Sir Henry Fermor, who gave five hundred pounds towards executing the monument. It is rife with tributary tears—admiring senates—opposing legions—and all the long-established superlatives of drowsy common-place.

These productions made the sculptor's name widely known, and commissions came to hand more than he could well execute. It is to the honour of Roubiliac that he never took price into consideration as compared to fame, and that he laboured incessantly not to gather money, but to make his name be heard of worthily hereafter. Two of his most extensive works are the monuments in memory of the Duke and Duchess of Montagu, at Boughton, in Northamptonshire. They are studiously magnificent and elaborately splendid, and

consequently deficient in that tranquil beauty which every natural taste expects in monumental sculpture. The price was large—the subjects noble: nor has he spared any thing but original thought in the composition. The execution is indeed fine—a skilful and even fastidious hand has passed carefully over the whole, and left no unseemly part to attract querulous criticism. But laborious grace and minute delicacy of workmanship will not atone for original tameness of design; and anxious as the artist was to inspire all his compositions with feeling and poetry, the monuments at Boughton can hardly be ranked among the happiest efforts of his chisel.

In single statues he was reckoned more skilful than in groupes—that of the celebrated Duncan Forbes, President of the College of Justice in Edinburgh, stands high in the second rank of his figures. It is more animated perhaps than might be looked for in a judge pronouncing judgment—yet the earnest look and sagacious brow are worthy of all praise. The arrival of this statue in the northern capital called party feelings into high play. Those who loved freedom civil and religious, and rejoiced to see a Protestant line of monarchs on the throne, hailed with rapturous welcomes the image of the man who more than any other had confirmed Scotland in her allegiance, and crushed rebellious hopes—whilst the still devoted, though hopeless, adherents of the ancient race regarded with scorn and hatred the all but living likeness of him who had sown dissensions amongst the Jacobite remnant—had narrowed their outgoings, and by his eloquence, prudence, and activity, extinguished for

ever the light of the House of Stuart. Thoughts such as these could not have been likely to mingle with the feelings of the sculptor—but he had worked in the true spirit of Forbes's character, and the likeness was on all hands admitted to be admirable. The marble out of which the statue is cut is very hard, and of a bluish tinge, with delicate veins. The surface of the drapery was polished till it shone, to preserve it from stains—for polish is not easily penetrated: and its flowing effect and soft redundance are not lessened by this experiment. Few sculptors venture on it, fearing it would make their works look cold and hard; many of the antique statues have nevertheless been finished till the gloss of the polish began to appear, and Canova himself revived this ancient practice with good effect. With all his enthusiasm Roubiliac was in one thing at least a strict economist—he threw none of his fine work away on places beyond the point of view. Thus in the statue of Forbes the falling cape of the robe behind, nay, even the back part of the wig up nearly to the crown of the head have never been touched by the sculptor's chisel. They are left as they came from the hand of the mason who rough-hewed from the model.

The Dutch influence of Scheemakers descending from the days of King William, and the hold which Rysbrach had taken of the patronage of the court before Roubiliac appeared, kept many works away which were due to his talents; he however obtained nearly about the same time the statues of George the First, and of that Duke of Somerset commonly called The Proud, for Cambridge, and

the monuments of Sir Peter Warren and Marshal Wade for Westminster Abbey. All these have had their warm admirers—but Walpole merely says "his statue of George the First in the Senate House at Cambridge, is well executed, and so is that of their chancellor Charles, Duke of Somerset, except that it is in a Vandyke dress, which might not be the fault of the sculptor." I once asked a sculptor of genius and taste concerning these statues, and this was his answer: "A man who was not told they were by Roubiliac might look at them once, but never think of them again—but when informed from whose hand they came, he would look for beauties and find few: careful workmanship and desire of effect distinguish them in common with all that sculptor's works—yet, as I have said, they are not striking performances, and one may pass by them without suffering a just reproach of want of taste." This, I apprehend, however, is too severe, to the extent of what artists call a shade or two.

The Vandyke dress of "The Proud Duke" is affected, and was probably not the offspring of the artist's own taste. It is not uncommon in both painting and sculpture for sitters and patrons to dictate posture and costume,—a circumstance which in some sort accounts for the tameness and sameness of many of our portraits. The Proud Duke was himself a patron of art, and did not obtain his to-name without cause. He had employed James Seymour to paint the figures—artists say portraits—of his horses at Petworth, and condescended to sit with his humble namesake at table. One day at dinner his grace filled his glass,

and saying with a sneer "*Cousin* Seymour, your health," drank it off. "My Lord," said the artist, "I believe I *have* the honour of being related to your grace." The proud peer rose from table, and ordered his steward to dismiss the presumptuous painter, and employ a humbler brother of the brush. This was accordingly done; but when the new painter saw the spirited works of his predecessor he shook his head, and retiring said, "No man in England can compete with James Seymour." The Duke now condescended to recall his discarded cousin. "My Lord," was the answer of Seymour, "I can now prove to the world that I am of your blood—*I won't come.*"

The monuments to Warren and Wade demand a more detailed account—not so much for their excellence, as from the anxiety of the sculptor to produce something striking and remarkable concerning two very ordinary men. The former exhibits a Hercules placing the bust of Sir Peter Warren on its pedestal, while Navigation, a figure most exquisitely handled, stands ready to crown it with laurel. The British flag forms a kind of background to the figures, and a horn of plenty pours out its rich contents beside an anchor and a cannon. The monument of Wade is composed of a pillar adorned with military trophies—Time eagerly approaches to pull it down, but Fame pushes the old anarch back and protects it. Both these works were erected by order of government,—and either cost more money than invention. The workmanship is indeed beautiful, and in extent and variety of labour the public had a pennyworth; but they are wofully deficient in originality, and are the

companions and forerunners of a multitude of allegories done in stone which disgrace our churches and insult the memories of many worthy warriors and meritorious statesmen. Statues alone would be better understood by all classes than those dark and pedantic conceits, and would moreover save the annual outlay upon Fames, Victorys, Valours, and Britannias, which can be manufactured with as little cost of imagination as cottons and muslins. Even the literal matter-of-fact works of Scheemakers and Rysbrach are preferable to those elaborate absurdities.

It was not often that Roubiliac wrought so—his mind rose with his subject. His next works—the statues of Shakespeare and Newton—are admired by two very different classes of men of taste. All who love serene dignity and graceful composure prefer the Philosopher, while those who delight in lively action and that kind of energy which seems to set the whole body into motion, give the palm to the Poet. The former was made for Trinity College, Cambridge, where it now stands; the latter for David Garrick, to be placed in his garden at Hampton, from whence it was removed, in conformity to his will, to the British Museum—thus they have both places of distinction, where they are seen and valued. The Sir Isaac is far superior to Shakspeare—though there can be no doubt that Roubiliac exerted his fancy and exhausted his skill to render the latter *a chef d'œuvre*. Newton is represented standing, holding up a prism, and between his hand and the thought stamped upon his brow there is a visible connexion and harmony. He exhibits a calm co-

lossal vigour of intellect, such as we have reason to believe was the character of the living man—touched too, and that not a little, with those amenities enumerated by his friend Thomson.

> "How mild, how calm,
> How greatly humble, how divinely good!
> How firm established on eternal truth!
> Fervent in doing well, with every nerve
> Still pressing on forgetful of the past,
> And panting for perfection: far above
> Those little cares and visionary joys
> That so perplex the fond impassioned heart
> Of ever-cheated, ever-trusting man."

On looking upon this noble statue—the worthy image of one of the loftiest of human beings—we may ask with the poet of the Seasons, when dwelling on the greatness of Newton's discoveries, and pointing out the wondrous harmony of their combinations,

> "Did ever poet image aught so fair?"

Horace Walpole indeed (but he seems to have thought it due to his station to differ occasionally with the bulk of the world) declares, that the air is a little too pert for so grave a man; and Flaxman (who in truth disliked all other English sculptors but Banks) shuts his eyes to merit which rivalled his own. To Chantrey, an authority which few will question, I am indebted for the following opinion, which I apprehend is in accordance with that of the whole nation nearly. "The Sir Isaac Newton is the noblest, I think, of all our English statues. There is an air of nature, and a loftiness of thought about it, which no other artist has in

this country, I suspect, reached. You cannot imagine any thing grander in sentiment, and the execution is every way worthy of it."

I know not well how to speak of the Shakespeare after the Newton; it is a failure compared to that production, to say nothing of the genius which it presumes to embody. The same sort of feeling which led him astray in his Handel has bewildered him here; he imagined that a great poet necessarily, in his fits of inspiration, put himself into extravagant attitudes—that his whole body, like that of Donne's mistress, was instinct with active thought—and that even his dress was in duty bound to be moved with Parnassian dreams. The nobler the poet, the wilder the attitude. On this principle he appears to have gone. But the public mind is haunted with a nobler image; we refuse to look upon this as a personation of the majestic genius of the dramatist; nor can we even accept of it as an accurate fac-simile of the man in look, dress, and dimensions, since we know that the materials of such a likeness did not exist at the time. Indeed, an exact fac-simile of the Homer of Greece would be infinitely more gratifying than the sublimest fictions of art; we would rather see a cold clod-like cast of his face than his imaginary head by Phidias. But this cannot be, even in Shakespeare's case; and the very aspect of truth which the statue of Roubiliac wears is one cause of its failure. The reality haunted him as in the statue of Handel; but then in the case of the great composer the living man existed to justify or condemn the likeness, whereas the looks of the bard of Avon lived only in imagination, and it is the practice of ima-

gination to beautify and exalt. A statue of dignified demeanour, and visible mental capacity, touched a little in the looks from those portraits which are received as Shakespeare's, especially the rude old bust at Stratford-on-Avon, ought to have been the aim of the artist.

This statue was a commission, as we have said, from Garrick, and the price was fixed by the player at the parsimonious sum of three hundred guineas. David, as I have learned from his correspondence, was eminently skilful in the art of bargain-making, and persuaded the enthusiastic sculptor to undertake the work at a price which would barely cover the model and the marble. Now he who works with the consciousness that he is to be a loser, seldom exerts himself like one under the double inspiration of fame and money, and Roubiliac could not but be sensible that he was to be out of pocket. Besides, the artist who carved stone under the auspices of Garrick was not likely to have much of his own will; the great player was a resolute "chipper and hewer" in dramatic compositions, and having not only represented the chief characters, but altered and recast whole pieces, of our great poet, he no doubt thought himself thoroughly qualified to dictate respecting his person. It is said that he put himself into countenance, and then into posture, and desired the astonished sculptor to model away—"for behold," said he, "the poet of Avon!" This tradition is countenanced by the vanity of David, and by the story related of him respecting Hogarth's portrait of Fielding. The sculptor, who had promised to carve the statue in the best marble he could afford

for the price, cut it from a block hard indeed and durable, but full of faint veins, which, crossing the eyes probably or the mouth, communicated a sinister expression to the whole face. "What!" exclaimed Garrick, "was Shakespeare marked with mulberries?" Roubiliac hewed the objectionable head from the shoulders, and replaced it with one of purer marble—and his patron was satisfied. From an inscription on the pedestal it appears that the statue was finished in 1758.

During the progress of this work Garrick, as might be expected, was a frequent visitor in the sculptor's studio. On one occasion he met with Roubiliac in the street, and said "How's Shakespeare, eh? I shall go and pay my respects to him." Now David was desirous of being thought clever at many things, and at that time carried a foot-rule in his pocket, to the annoyance of the carpenters at the theatre, on whose labours he often laid it, haranguing them on measure and value-price. As he entered the marble-yard he whispered to the sculptor, "Only see now how I shall frighten that great red-headed Yorkshireman sawing the stone." He accordingly stood still at once—fixed his eyes on the fellow—cowered half to the ground—assumed a diabolical look—and drew his foot-rule slowly from his pocket, like as he would have done a pistol. It was all in vain; his intended victim coolly squirted some tobacco-juice from the corner of his mouth, and said "What trick will you be after next, my little master?"

In those days, as in ours, no man could hope to be considered a first-rate artist who had not visited

the glories of Rome. To Rome accordingly Roubiliac went, at the ripe age of fifty years, accompanied by Hudson the painter, a man too old for instruction, and on whom all instruction, at any time, would probably have been wasted. The travellers encountered Reynolds on Mount Cenis, and listened to his enthusiasm concerning Michael Angelo and the Sistine Chapel. Of the result of the expedition Flaxman says: "Roubiliac went to Italy—was absent from home three months, going and returning—stayed three days in Rome, and laughed at the sublime remains of ancient sculpture." We must however remember that Flaxman was not only a most zealous and intelligent, but also a most bigoted worshipper of the antique. It happened, on the other hand, that the god of Roubiliac was Bernini; but who in truth could have expected that a sculptor, with fifty years and no trivial share of fame on his head, would put himself through a course of probationary study? Roubiliac went to Rome for his pleasure; he had already settled his style, and given fair specimens of it, and probably thought he had no more to learn; we must therefore receive Flaxman's sarcastic language with caution. He was a Frenchman, with much of the liveliness of his nation about him. His works are in the spirit of his own land, as well as in that of Bernini—sobered a little, it may be, by the gravity of his adopted country. A serious change of style, such as Flaxman demanded, would have been against the man's nature, and in all likelihood injurious to his fortune. The taming-down of his peculiarities might have proved a dangerous experiment: he might

have got rid of them without putting better things in their place. We have, however, no other notice of his travels than that he met Reynolds and laughed at the antique.

The splendour of his statues threw his busts a little into shade; yet they are both numerous and excellent. There is a mixture of reality and fancy in them which conciliates the tastes of persons holding widely different theories as to the proper objects of art. If they must be censured for any thing, it is for excess of action and flutter of drapery. The far-famed specimens at Trinity College, Cambridge, are of surpassing beauty; they are, it is true, the heads of eminent men—of Ray, Willoughby, Newton, &c.: and in such cases he must be a poor artist who does not feel spirited to extraordinary exertions. They excel as much in mere workmanship, as in originality of air and dignified ease of expression. "Those busts," I have heard Chantrey say, "impressed me at once with veneration for the genius of the artist. I know of no works of that kind which may be safely compared to them. They have a manly air and vigorous freedom of manner, which proves to me that he treated them rather in the manner of the heads of statues than as domestic portraits, where fidelity of resemblance is more aimed at. Those who have not seen the Cambridge busts, and above all the statue of Newton, are strangers to the best works of Roubiliac."

Four busts, almost of equal talent with these, were made for Frederick Prince of Wales, as a present to Pope the poet, who in his turn bequeathed them to Lord Lyttleton, by whom they

were placed at Hagley. These are heads of Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden, the two former of which, however, can only be regarded as agreeable fictions. Roubiliac executed also an exquisite bust of Pope himself, which is now in the collection of Mr. Watson Taylor; his head of Sir Robert Walpole stands at Haughton; Dr. Frewer in the library of Christ Church, Oxford; and that of the Earl of Leicester—a plaster model, now secured to posterity by the chisel of Chantrey—may be seen in the rich gallery of Mr. Coke at Holkham.

The works of Roubiliac are not numerous compared with those of Scheemakers. But the Dutchman was only a dexterous smoother of marble, whose productions keep their places from the weight of the materials, not from their ability; while exquisite workmanship, and the stamp of genius, mark the productions of the Frenchman, and above all the expression of his faces. The monument of Mrs. Nightingale in Westminster Abbey has perhaps been more generally praised than any of his works. Those who are not pleased with the natural pathos of one part, are captivated by the allegorical extravagance of another; and persons who care for none of these matters, find enough to admire in the difficult workmanship of the marble skeleton. The lady to whom the monument is raised was of the noble family of Ferrers—young, beautiful, and beloved. Bearing these circumstances in mind, the sculptor conceived a design, at once striking and strange—an ingenious conceit, which won the love of the public, and has kept it these eighty years. In the natural portion

there is domestic pathos—an expiring wife and an agonized husband. No one can look on the scene without being deeply moved. But he would not trust to simple emotion—

> " The force of nature could no farther go"—

and he called in the aid of allegory. Beneath the couch on which Mrs. Nightingale is dying, he opens an iron door, and out comes its tenant Death—no grisly phantom, but a dry and disgusting skeleton, brandishing a dart which he aims at the lady. Against this *figurative* weapon the husband opposes an arm of *flesh*. Shadow goes to war with substance—a figure of speech fights a figure born of a woman. The mixture is surely very absurd. Besides, the Death is meanly imagined; he is the common dry-bones of every vulgar tale. It was not so that Milton dealt with this difficult allegory. We are satisfied with the indistinct image which he gives us:

> " What seemed his head
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

We have no grinning jaws, nor marrowless bones here. The same great poet makes Death rejoice when blood was first shed on earth, and, like a bird of prey, smell the carnage; still there is no distinct image:

> " So scented the grim Feature, and upturned
> His nostrils huge into the murky air,
> Sagacious of his quarry from afar."

The poet saw the difficulty, the sculptor saw none. What appeared a deformity to Milton, was probably a beauty in the eyes of Roubiliac; he has

carved an image which astonishes at first and disgusts afterwards.

Still, with this allegorical drawback, it is a noble monument. The dying woman would do honour to any artist. Her right arm and hand are considered by sculptors as the perfection of fine workmanship. Life seems slowly receding from her tapering fingers and her quivering wrist. Even Death himself—dry and sapless though he be—the very fleshless cheeks and eyeless sockets seem flashing with malignant joy. It is supposed that Roubiliac borrowed this theatrical allegory from René Michel Slodtz, who introduced a similar idea into a monument in the church of St. Sulpice at Paris in 1750; but why should he travel so far? For an hundred years or more the grim skeleton, with his lifted dart, has menaced a woman at the head of the well-known ditty called Death and the Lady. The enemy seems resolute on mischief, and she holds up her hand and fan to oppose him—the resemblance is close. The Death and Dr. Hornbook of Burns, with its inimitable mixture of imagination and humour, has put to flight that brood of monitory skeletons; nor has the monument of Susanna Jane Davidson—by a later hand—been without its share in this salutary reformation. That audacious parody on the monument by Roubiliac is placed near it: here Death has gone a step or two farther than in the case of Mrs. Nightingale; he has marched boldly up to the dying lady, and struck his dart with such vehement force and might, that it is sunk over the barbs in her bosom. Never was a young and beautiful creature—for the lady was both—so hideously caricatured.

Roubiliac superintended the erection of the Nightingale monument himself, and it was frequently related of him by Gayfere, the Abbey mason, that he found him one day standing with his arms folded and his looks fixed upon one of those knightly figures which support the canopy over the statue of Sir Francis Vere. As he approached, the artist laid his hand on his arm, pointed to the figure, and said, "Hush! he will speak soon." It was in this sort of fashion that the Frenchman loved to convey his admiration, and certainly the work in question merited all and more than he said. It is one of the most touching works in the whole Abbey, and tells its story simply and effectually. Sir Francis Vere, a gentleman of fame in learning and in arms, one of the many worthies of the days of Elizabeth, is carved in a loose gown on a quilt of alabaster, while over him is borne a horizontal table by four kneeling knights, bareheaded, with his coat of mail and helmet and sword surmounting it. The name of the sculptor is unknown. It is one of the last works executed in the spirit of our Gothic monuments, and the best.

The first of Roubiliac's performances was a statue of Handel, for Vauxhall—the last work which he executed was the monument of the same person for Westminster Abbey; he did not long survive its erection. He had grown old—had obtained fame and distinction; but the world had not otherwise smiled, and he saw, when it was too late, that he had neglected his fortune for what was soon to be to him as a shadow. His death, I

am grieved to add, was hastened by his custom of labouring with his chisel late in the evenings, after all his workmen had retired. This enthusiastic—I ought perhaps to say this *necessary*—diligence of the old man was imputed by those unacquainted with the unfortunate condition of his affairs, to a sordid desire of gain; a meanness which seldom belongs to one with so large a share of poetry in his soul—and which, at all events, was wholly alien to the nature of Roubiliac. The man who modelled and carved marble statues for three hundred guineas, was not likely to grow rich—nor when more liberal customers appeared did he seek wealth by sparing labour. On all his works there is a visible carefulness of finish which has been more commended than followed. Those who are desirous of eminence in the difficult art of working marble till it looks like human flesh and raiment, would do well to study the heads and the draperies of Roubiliac. He died on the 11th of January, 1762, and was buried in the neighbourhood of his residence—in St. Martin's Church Yard. Hogarth and Reynolds attended the funeral.

His portrait, painted by a friend and fellow-sculptor, Adrien Charpentier, it is at once a record of his looks and of his way of working. He is represented modelling the small-size figure of his Shakespeare—what is seen of his head is bald—the bosom open—the wristbands loose—his lips apart, and his eyes sparkling. By nation and by nature he was evidently a lively bustling man—and it has been Charpentier's wish to exhibit him in a sort of ecstacy of inspiration. He is touching

the sight of the eye, with his modelling tool—a delicate operation, which would have required both a calm mind and a steady hand.

He had frequent recourse to living nature to help him out with his conceptions. From a chairman he is said to have copied the legs, and from a waterman the arms of the Hercules, in Warren's monument. I wish I could tell where he found the original of the figure of Navigation, in the same work—it is finely imagined, and far more exquisitely handled. If he happened to be in company with a lady whose hands were beautiful, or whose ears were small and finely shaped, he would gaze wistfully at her, and has been known to startle sensitive spinsters with apprehensions of matrimony, seizing them suddenly by the wrist, and crying rapturously,—"Madam, I must have your hand—madam, I shall have your ear!" The ear of Handel, he said, was so fine in music, that it could only be represented in marble by one small and elegant, and the model for this musical ear belonged to Miss Rich, the daughter of one of his friends. "My father," says the author of the life of Nollekens, "related the following anecdote of Roubiliac, who generally was so studiously wrapt up and absorbed in his art as to lose all individual recollection whatever of person and place unconnected with the subject immediately on his mind. One day at dinner, during the time he was so intently engaged in modelling the figure of Mr. Nightingale warding off the dart of death from his wife, he suddenly dropt his knife and fork on his plate, fell back in his chair, and then in an instant darted forward and threw his features into the

strongest possible expression of fear; at the same moment fixing his piercing eye so expressively on the country lad who waited at table, that he was greatly astonished. . . He seldom (continues Smith) modelled his drapery for his monumental figures, but carved it from the linen itself, which he dipped into warm starch water, so that when he had pleased himself he left it to cool and dry, and then proceeded with the marble: this my father assured me he did with all the drapery on Nightingale's monument."

His establishment was never splendid—he ate the annual buck of Sir Edward Walpole with a few chosen friends—but his chief haunt was the tavern, then more the resort of the elegant and the learned than now, where he enjoyed his bottle of wine and his favourite game of whist. On one occasion it is related that he had dined out—was merry with wine—and having invited a companion, who had sat too late for admission to his own chamber, to accompany him home, took the office of servant upon himself, showed his friend to a bedroom, and wished him good-night. No sooner had they parted, than the guest stripped off his clothes and was about to make a plunge into bed, when he found it most unpleasantly occupied by a corpse. "Roubiliac!" he shouted, till the whole house echoed—"Roubiliac, come here!" The sculptor burst into the chamber, exclaiming, "Mon Dieu! what is de matter?" "The matter!" said his friend—"look there!" "Oh dear, oh dear!" said the artist; affected, it is said, to tears—"it is poor negro Mary, my housemaid. She died yesterday, and they have laid her

out here. Poor Mary! oh dear me!—Come, I shall find you another bed."

Were we to take the merits of Roubiliac from some of his brethren of the chisel, he would have a lower place in public estimation than he at present holds; but I concur on the whole with the saying of Lord Chesterfield, that he was a sculptor, and his rivals stone-cutters. The strictures of Flaxman are not very worthy of his natural kindness and candour. While discussing the influence of Bernini in art, he says—"Rysbrach and Roubiliac spread the popularity of this taste in England; but as the first of these sculptors was a mere workman, too insipid to give pleasure, and too dull to offend greatly, we shall dismiss him without further notice. The other deserves more attention. Roubiliac was an enthusiast in his art; possessed of considerable talents: he copied vulgar nature with zeal, and some of his figures seem alive; but their characters are mean, their expressions grimace, and their forms frequently bad: his draperies are worked with great diligence and labour from the most disagreeable examples in nature, the folds being either heavy or meagre, frequently without a determined general form, and hung on his figures with little meaning. He grouped two figures together, for he never attempted more, better than most of his contemporaries; but his thoughts are conceits, and his compositions epigrams."

Flaxman, it must be acknowledged, though an amiable man, was one of the sharpest of critics—let the reader remember, that he who could see only conceit and epigram in the works of Rou-

biliac, refused to rank Bacon amongst the English sculptors, and looked with more pity than admiration upon all later attempts. He had obtained his own fame by the classic compositions with which he illustrated Homer, and regarded all those who refused to own the supremacy of the antique sculpture as masons and stone-cutters. Roubiliac, on the other hand, was bred in the school of Bernini: he thought the austere composure of the ancient statues too lifeless, and was inclined to place beauty in action. From working in this spirit he often became affected and extravagant, especially in monumental sculpture, which demands contemplation and repose, and rejects violent attitudes and all other sentiment save the devout; yet, in spite of all these defects, the poetry of his conceptions gains our respect, and the grace of his execution commands admiration.

His works, though out-done by the productions of Flaxman and Chantrey, have taken a lasting hold of the public admiration. That he is unequal — conceited — constrained in attitude, and too voluminous in his draperies, is true; — but what is this to set against the justice and nature which he so often exhibits, and the noble ardour of sentiment which animates those great works on which his reputation is mainly built? He spared no labour — was not afraid of strong reliefs, of deep and difficult folds and sinkings, and of attitudes which ate much marble and consumed time in executing. If he has little sedate beauty or tranquil thought, he has much elegance of action; and if he sometimes sacrificed nature and simpli-

city, he atoned for it by poetic energy. He dealt largely in abstract ideas, nor did he always use them wisely. They had indeed been introduced an hundred years before he made his appearance. Stone, in 1628, carved Sir George Holles, well known in the wars of the Netherlands, riding in complete armour, with Pallas on one side and Bellona on the other; and the whole heathen mythology had been naturalized in painting by the ready hands, but sterile fancies, of Verrio and La Guerre. This frozen progeny, though supported by the talent of Banks and the fine genius of Flaxman, languished from the days of Roubiliac.

I have said that he was a lover of poetry and a writer of verses: the following lines, composed within a year of his death, will perhaps satisfy the curiosity of the reader.

Pretendu Connoisseur qui sur l'antique glose,
Quittez ce ton pedant, ce mepris affecté
Pour tout ce que le temps n'a pas encore gaté;
Vois ce Salon, et tu perdras
Cette prevention injuste,
Et bien etonné conviendras
Qu'il ne faut pas qu'un Mecenas
Pour revoir le Siècle d'Auguste.

JOSEPH WILTON

Is to be numbered among those lucky artists, who, with humble genius, moderate skill, and ordinary prudence, acquire a name and a fortune equal or superior to men of higher talents and attainments. He was born in London on the 16th July, 1722, and having shown early in life a strong inclination for sculpture, was placed by his father, a plasterer, under Laurent Delvaux at Neville, in Brabant. Of the progress which he made under this foreign instructor we have no account. In his twenty-second year he proceeded to Paris,—studied in the Academy under the direction of Pigalle, whom Voltaire patronized—gained the silver medal—and made himself acquainted with the art of working in marble. In 1747 he removed to Rome—where he distinguished himself so much to the satisfaction of the Roman Academy, that in 1750 he was presented with what is called the Jubilee Gold Medal, given by Pope Benedict the Fourteenth—and, what was more beneficial to his future fortunes, acquired the patronage of Mr. Locke of Norbury Park—a gentleman eminent for taste, and no less so for generosity. Wilton was the first of our native sculptors who went through a regular course of academic study,—the wealth of the family enabling him to gratify all his desires of instruction and of travel.*

* His father, though a common plasterer, acquired a fair fortune by manufacturing ornaments for ceilings and for fur-

During his stay in Italy, he executed many copies of the antique statues—and as they were in marble, it is likely that he had assistants—for a fine copy of a work of art in such materials can be done by no one in a hurry. For these productions he found a ready market, chiefly amongst his travelling countrymen; and no doubt was willing to believe, that what filled his pocket extended his reputation. It was the practice then, as it is still, to manufacture statues and paintings of all dimensions, but chiefly half or full size, from esteemed works, and sell them according to the generosity of customers. This has filled the world with multitudes of coarse imitations, which have nothing of their originals save the posture and dimension, and are deficient in all that distinguishes the works of genius from those of a machine. Having thus spent eight years in Italy, Wilton returned to London, accompanied by Cipriani, the painter, Chambers, the architect, and one Capizzoldi—a skilful modeller, a sculptor, and also a painter, who was desirous of finding a fortune in England. This poor Italian wanderer took an attic in Warwick Street—purchased two real chairs and a table—having no more money to spend among the upholsterers, limned upon the naked walls the proper allowance of sofas and curtains,—and in this humble abode entertained his friends

niture, resembling those known in France by the name of papier-maché; and in his workshops in Hedge Lane, Charing Cross, and in Edward Street, Cavendish Square, he employed several hundreds of men and boys in this profitable manufacture. These premises were afterwards occupied by his more eminent son.

on the equally humble fare of an oyster and a pint of porter. A far different abode awaited his friend Wilton.

The Duke of Richmond at this period conceived an affection for sculpture, and resolved to give his country the advantage of his taste and enthusiasm. He formed a gallery in Spring Gardens—purchased thirty casts of antique groups and statues—opened the doors to the students of art, and promised premiums to the most meritorious. Of this gallery Wilton and Cipriani were chosen directors, and Romney was one of the students. The Duke's liberality is thus commended by Hayley, that great master in the art of putting prose into the posture of verse:—

> "The youthful noble, on a princely plan,
> Encouraged infant art, and first began
> Before the studious eye of youth to place
> The ancient models of ideal grace."

Not long after, the war called the Duke of Richmond to his regiment, and he hastened abroad, neglecting, it is said, to pay the premiums he had promised, for which he was sharply satirized by some exasperated artist, who had the impudence to fix his lampoon upon the gallery door. When his Grace returned from the German war, he hastened to the gallery, and found to his mortification a sarcastic placard in his own name apologizing for his poverty, and expressing his sorrow for having promised premiums which he could not afford to pay. He closed the gallery, dispersed the casts, notwithstanding the submission of some of the students, and resented for a long period this audacious

proceeding. Smollett, however, assures us that the premiums were eventually paid; and it appears by a letter from Woollett the engraver, written in 1770, that the Duke was at length appeased so far as to re-open the gallery, and place it under the direction of the Society of Artists.

Wilton, before his release from the management of the Richmond Gallery, was appointed State Coach Carver to the King. Nor was this a place of empty honour alone—it was so far profitable as to enable him to erect extensive workshops where Foley Place now stands. There he made the coronation coach for George the Third—a work which required a model, and attracted many gazers. He was now in full employment—his skill in carving marble, with a fleshy softness of surface, was considerable—his talents for design were reckoned very promising; and ere long he began to be congratulated as the first great restorer of freedom to British sculpture.

For many centuries sculpture in this island, as well as elsewhere, had submitted to strange alliances; the charges for carving statues were mixed with tailors' bills and goldsmiths' accounts,—and sculptors were numbered with common menials and paid by the week. Architecture had been long its principal patron, but when a change took place in the style of our public buildings, works of art were required capable of telling their own tale, and worthy of claiming a separate and independent fame. Long-established tyranny, however, is not readily got rid of. The architects succeeded in maintaining their authority over the swarms of foreign sculptors, whom want of subsistence allured

to the British market, and dictated monuments something in the mathematical principles of their profession. The names of Kent and Gibbs and Chambers appear upon our public monuments as inventors of the designs, while the artists who executed them are mentioned as mere modelling tools or chisels, which moved as they were directed by these architectural lords-paramount. Rysbrach, Scheemakers, and even Roubiliac, were fain to submit to the tyranny. In truth the architects of those days were mighty men. Not contented with planning the houses in which the nobles lived, they laid out the gardens in which they walked—cooled their summer seats and arbours with artificial cascades—hung gods and seasons upon the ceilings of their galleries—sketched the cradles for their children—dictated the form and flowers of their ladies' dresses—and following them to the family vault, erected a triumphant monument in honour of their virtues. Wilton at last resisted, and claimed the right of inventing his own designs. The death of his father had filled his pockets; he could afford to rebel; and his rebellion was at last crowned with success.

The first public work to which he applied his emancipated powers was the monument of General Wolfe in Westminster Abbey. Whatever advantage the liberty of making his own designs might be to himself, this new work showed that the profit of the nation was little. The monument is crowded with figures and emblems, and like the inventions of the architects in every thing, save the wild disorder which reigns over the whole. Wolfe, falling amidst the tumult of battle,

lays his hand gently on the mortal wound—a grenadier supports him—a Highland serjeant looks sorrowfully on—two lions watch at his feet, and over his head hovers an angel with a wreath of glory. There is little originality here, and as little of dignified nature—the hero dies like an ordinary mortal—and all that dwells on the mind of the beholder when he passes on, is the strange disorder into which the materials of the composition are flung. One of the accompaniments, however, merits remembrance—this is a representation in bass-relief of the march of the British troops from the river bank to the summit of the heights of Abraham. It is full of truth, and gives a lively image of one of the most daring exploits that any warriors ever performed. Veterans, who had fought on that memorable day, have been observed lingering for hours, following with the end of their staffs the march of their comrades up the shaggy precipice, and discussing the merits of the different leaders. This supplemental portion is in bronze, and was the work of Wilton's early companion, Capizzoldi. The monument found both maligners and admirers—the former, in addition to the general want of dignity, objected to the figure of Wolfe in his shirt and stockings, while the soldier beside him was in full uniform; and the latter answered, that the artist was right to adopt such an expedient in order to display that knowledge of anatomy which he was allowed to possess.

His next public monument—that of Admiral Holmes—sustained, at best, the credit Wilton had obtained by that to the conqueror of Quebec. The worshippers of antique costume were gra-

tified with beholding a British admiral drest like a Roman, standing with his right hand resting on a mounted cannon, over which was displayed the English flag—while every lover of historic truth and nature exclaimed against a clumsy fiction by which the first century shook hands with the eighteenth. The workmanship, however, was respectable, and as one eye is enough to make a man king among the blind, Wilton triumphed over all his fellows.

The third work, which came from his chisel, was the monument of the Earl and Countess of Montrath. "The design is truly grand"—says a contemporary critic—"and the execution masterly. On the summit is the representation of the splendid mansions of the blessed, with cherubim and seraphim, and on a sarcophagus beneath are two principal figures—the one, an angel ascending on a cloud, the other, the Countess in the attitude of rising from the dead supported by the angel, who holds her up with his left hand, and with his right points to heaven, where a seat is prepared for her, and where another angel is ready to receive and crown her with a wreath of glory. There are beauties in this monument which exceed description—the pleasure in the countenance of the receiving angel is inimitable, and the fine feathering of the wings has a lightness which nature only can surpass." A single glance at this cumbrous monument will abate by two-thirds the splendour of such praise. The conception has been admired less for its originality than for its magnificence; but those who are acquainted with the nature and materials of sculpture, will feel at once that no

artist could hope to embody a design of such pretensions. That Wilton has failed there can be little doubt; we are surprized at the loftiness and extent of the monument—see angels on earth and in air—marvel how the latter are supported, and pass on to think of the whole affair no more.

In Stephen Hales—a divine and philosopher—Wilton had a happier subject for his skill than he had been furnished with either in Holmes or in Montrath; but the sobriety of his imagination was such that, in a favourable subject, he could find nothing new. Religion, a ready-made figure of long standing in the church, took her station on one side of the monument, while Botany maintained a proper balance of parts on the other. The latter displays a medallion of Hales—the former deplores his loss, while at the feet of Botany the winds appear on a globe, in allusion to his invention of ventilators. This artist was unacquainted with the limits of his art; he was constantly attempting what sculpture could not perform: no complicated story can be related in marble, and much that suits description can find no historian in art. Darwin, the poet, planned a monument, recording the genius and inventions of Arkwright; the design exhibited the Pyramids of Egypt, a Sphinx, a Mummy, and a Spinning Machine! On the darkness of his sketch he threw a little light from his pen, and the whole became, in appearance, at once clear, consistent, and characteristic. But when the words were away, and the sculptor tried to tell the story with his modelling tool, all grew dark again. Many are the absurdities committed even in our own times in marble.

The invention of the steam-engine has been recorded by the figure of an elephant, which may imply power but cannot surely represent active motion. When a basis for Chantrey's statue of Grattan was under discussion, one of the orator's friends, and a witty one too, said "Pedestal! the best pedestal for him is the Rock of the Constitution—carve that and put him upon it." "A good notion," answered another of his countrymen, "but how the devil are we to know the Rock of the Constitution from any other rock?"

Of the rest of our artist's performances it is not necessary to speak at length; the tomb of Pulteney, Earl of Bath, has a profile and an urn, supported by Wisdom and Poetry; his George the Third at the Royal Exchange wears the dress of a Roman Emperor; and a monument, which I have never seen, belonging to the family of Cremorne, in Ireland, has been praised as the most beautiful of all his productions. His most pleasing works are perhaps the copies which he made from antique statues; his acquaintance with anatomy and his skill with the chisel enabled him to feel and imitate the beauties of the great originals; and though this may seem but a third-rate kind of praise, all will know its value who have tried to imitate in marble the Venus, the dying Gladiator, the Laocoon, and the Apollo. Anxious to preserve his naked figures from stains and dust, Wilton, like Roubiliac, finished them so highly that they shone, or rather glimmered.

He was likewise a flourishing dealer in busts, till the superior talents of Nollekens expelled him from that profitable market. Some of them are of

eminent men, and not unskilfully handled—Bacon, Cromwell, Newton, Swift, Wolfe, Chatham and Chesterfield. This last is in the British Museum; the others are scattered through various collections. There is an air of nature and reality in the portrait of Cromwell; but it is coarse—even ferocious: such vulgarity of looks is at variance with all the descriptions I have read, and with the famous Florence mask of the usurper's face, whence Wilton professed to have copied his features.

Overflowing wealth, and ambition to lay it out on fine company, interrupted the labours of our sculptor. The fortune which he inherited from his father, and his own professional gains, had placed him far above all fear of want—and he could now indulge a disposition naturally somewhat ostentatious—dress out his wife and children as if they had come of nobility—live in a large house, magnificently furnished, and surround an affluent table with distinguished guests. Lord Charlemont, who patronized Hogarth, Mr. Locke, of Norbury Park, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir William Chambers, Bartolozzi the engraver, Cipriani, Richard Wilson, and, greatest of all, Johnson himself, were frequent visitors; nor should it be omitted that Joseph Baretti, a man distinguished by the friendship of many eminent persons, and who was skilful in the agreeable art of flattery, had a cover regularly set for him as five o'clock announced the sculptor's dinner hour. This man did not confine his flattery to the hour when the haunch of venison smoked and the wine circulated; in his Guide to the Royal Academy he remembered Wilton's dinners, and talks "scholarly" of the high talents, the masterly style, and the taste and skill of his entertainer.

Another attraction to Wilton's table was the beauty of his daughter, afterwards married to Sir Robert Chambers; her portrait by Reynolds remains to justify the commendation lavished on her—even Johnson was not insensible to the influence of her charms.*

To his labours at public monuments and gains in copying antique statues for noblemens' galleries, Wilton had added the profits arising from a practice common in Italy—that of patching up and repairing old fragments for the collections of those rich and travelled persons whose pleasure it was to purchase them. In this kind of jugglery the Italians excel all mankind—they gather together the crushed and mutilated members of two or three old marbles, and by means of a little skill of hand, good cement, and sleight in colouring, raise up a complete figure, on which they confer the name of some lost statue, and as such sell it to those whose pockets are better furnished than their heads—especially our English *cognoscenti*. It is indeed wonderful with what neatness and elegance those

* "Chambers," writes Johnson to Boswell, in 1774, "is either married or almost married to Miss Wilton, a girl of sixteen, exquisitely beautiful, whom he has with his lawyer's tongue persuaded to take her chance with him in the East." Of Joseph Baretti and Richard Wilson, Smith, in his amusing work, says that he has frequently seen them walking under the rows of large elms which then shaded a rope walk at the end of Union Street, till Wilton's dinner hour should be announced, by Portland Chapel. "I have the figures of these men still," says the writer, "in my mind's eye. Baretti was of a middling stature, squabby, round shouldered and near-sighted; and the landscape painter was rather tall, square shouldered, and well built; but with a nose which had increased to an enormous size. They both wore cocked hats and walked with canes."

practised impostors make up a work for sale; all fractures and patches and joints are concealed under a coat of yellowish colouring, which seems the natural result of time—and the rejoicing virtuoso treasures up in his gallery another legitimate specimen of the wonderful genius of Greece! That Wilton dealt occasionally in this kind of manufacture there is abundance of proof—that he ever excelled in it I am inclined to doubt. He failed so miserably with a Torso which had been injured by a fire in Richmond House, that his noble employer ordered the unfortunate rifacimento at once out of his sight. It is now in the Gallery of the British Museum.

Though Wilton, as we have said, resisted successfully the interference of architects in his public monuments, he did not refuse to embellish chimney pieces for the mansions built by his intimate friend, Sir William Chambers. Of these he made many, and as the carvings were profuse and the marble weighty, his profits were not inconsiderable. Some of the chimney-pieces of that period have much of the magnificence of monuments, and contribute greatly to the splendour of the apartments in which they are placed. They are now gone out of fashion; and one cannot but regret this—for in our cold and snowy climate few internal ornaments will ever fix the eye so often as a rich fire-place. His extensive employment led him into arrangements with the merchants of Carrara, by which he acquired a large supply of the best marble; of this he resold much to his brother artists, and if we may credit the statement of Smith, he knew how to drive a bargain with a penurious purchaser. "Nol-

lekens," (says that writer,) "who always avoided the possession of too great a stock, was now and then his customer. At one of their dealings, a dispute arising between them respecting the measurement of the last delivered block, Wilton commissioned his agent to toss up with Nollekens whether it should stand at the measurement delivered with it; and though it was doubtful whether the difference would amount to a shillin Nollekens accepted the proposal made of decision, which, unfortunately for him, was in favour of Wilton." It is incredible, however, that the difference of measurement in a rough block of marble could amount to no more than a shilling—in those days it was sold at about a guinea per cubic foot.

Wilton was one of the founders of the Royal Academy, and his polished manners and splendid table gave him no small influence among the brotherhood of art. After a career of some thirty years, during which he had maintained his station at the head of sculpture, and acquired a fine fortune, he thought of retiring. Age had come upon him—sculptors of higher talent were beginning to make their appearance—and he wisely resolved to abdicate the throne before some stronger spirit should thrust him from it. He disposed of his premises—sold his property by auction—and, accepting the situation of Keeper of the Academy, supported his name thenceforth by frequent intercourse with his brethren, and constant interchange of civilities with his patrons and friends. He was one of the most active movers in the impeachment and expulsion of Barry; and performed

the duties of his place with the applause of his fellow members till his death on the 25th of November, 1803, in the eighty-first year of his age.

Joseph Wilton was tall, portly, and personable—a perfect gentleman in manners—a warm friend and an agreeable companion. He went always dressed in the extremity of fashion, with a gold-headed cane, and a bag-wig plentifully bepowdered. His bust by Roubiliac represents him with a sculptor's hammer in his hand—it was given by Lady Chambers to the Royal Academy. Of his system of study or habits as an artist, who would inquire as a matter of either improvement or curiosity? and how little could now be ascertained were the inquiry made?

As a sculptor he has little original merit—with much of the mistempered fancy of Roubiliac he shows none of the Frenchman's poetry—he is never lofty, and but seldom natural. There is generally a coldness of sentiment in his faces, and a want of dignity in his attitudes. His groups are mobs—his statues appear reeling and intoxicated—there is no gravity, no repose; all is on the stretch, till action becomes painful. In his chief monuments we look in vain for that melancholy grace and serenity so becoming in sepulchral sculpture. The whole seems tumbling like waves of the sea. All that can be said on the other side is, that Wilton exhibits occasional grace of thought, and frequent skilfulness of execution, and that in his greater works there is a sort of picturesque splendour, which, in the opinion of the mob at least, will cover a multitude of sins.

THOMAS BANKS.

Of Banks, the fourth remarkable name in British sculpture, much less is known than his genius merits; he who devoted his whole life to the study of works of a poetic order—who embodied so many of the splendid images of Grecian fable, and was admired for his true antique feeling in art by Reynolds and by Flaxman, might deserve a better record than I can well hope to put together from the already forgotten fugitive literature of his time, and the scattered recollections of a few survivors.

He was the eldest son of William Banks, and was born in Lambeth, on Thames' side, December the 22d, 1735. His mother's maiden name no one has mentioned; she survived her husband, and resided many years at Hampton Court with her second son, Mark, who was one of the officers of the Board of Works. The father, a worthy and a diligent man, was land steward to the Duke of Beaufort—a station laborious certainly, and of honour in honourable hands, notwithstanding the jeers of Burns and the stern satire of Wilkie. The profits of his situation enabled William Banks to support his family respectably, and give his sons, of whom he had two besides our sculptor, an useful though not a brilliant education. I have heard the classical knowledge of Thomas spoken of in terms of



praise; I apprehend, however, that he tasted the literature of Greece, as many are content to do, only in translations. His intimacy with Homer was, I fear, through the medium of Macpherson, whose translation appeared during the course of his studies, and of which the sculptor was a passionate admirer. His love of a work, consigned by universal consent to oblivion, has this excuse—the Ossianic Homer abounds with clear and graphic images amidst all its bombast, and has many passages of which the touching pathos and natural beauty may satisfy the severest taste.

It seems to have been the wish of William Banks to direct his eldest son to some pursuit which should lead to affluence and distinction. A love of art was in the time of which I speak gaining strength in the land: painting was bringing a daily increase of riches and honour to Reynolds—sculpture numbered among its most fortunate followers the names of Roubiliac and Wilton—while Kent reigned nearly unlimited monarch in architecture. This personage indeed proudly wrote himself, "painter, sculptor, and architect:" while some complimented him with the supplementary titles of Gardener and Tailor, in sarcastic allusion to his skill in laying out pleasure-grounds, and making designs for ladies' gowns, with groves and Grecian temples on the skirts. However profitable painting and sculpture might seem in the eyes of a steward to his Grace of Beaufort, he could not fail to perceive that architecture presented a wider, safer, and more lucrative field for adventure; nor can we wonder that, pursuing the speculation onwards, he should have decided that the man who in his own

person included all three, was the fittest person for the instruction of his eldest son. Thomas—I know not at what age—was placed as a pupil under Kent, to learn architecture and the art of designing sculpture, at that time the auxiliary of the other.

With what diligence, for what period, or with what success he studied architecture, no one has told us, and inquiries have been made in vain. Perhaps his love of sculpture weaned his affections from a less congenial pursuit—he who loved to pore over the pages of poets, was more likely, if he thought of art at all, to betake himself to the modelling of heroes than the rearing of temples. Yet symptoms of architectural skill are evident in some of his bass-reliefs; there is a simplicity of style and an aërial perspective, which show that he had made some progress in his master's main profession. At what time he left Kent and devoted himself to sculpture cannot now be known. Some, who remember the man in his later days, allude to an intermediate period in which he pursued, they say, the profession of a wood-carver, then a matter of higher moment than now, for it was closely interwoven with sculpture, and held out the double allurements of profit and distinction. That he was skilful in wood carving is well known; but that he ever practised it for his daily bread, I am inclined to doubt. His daughter, his only child, has in her possession a winged angel, which he carved in sycamore for the top of her harp; but no other work in that material has been ascertained for his. It is singular how few have had the fortune to be put at the outset of life into the path wherein their genius lay. The apprentice of Kent,

and a greater than he, Chantrey, were taught wood-carving—it is idle to multiply similar examples.

I have not heard that Banks pursued his studies in his proper art under any master, or that he attended any seminary of public instruction before the establishment of the Royal Academy. Places of study were indeed open before; but they seem not to have been the regular resort of all who had knowledge of that kind to acquire. I have been assured that Banks was virtually his own instructor —that he sought heroic beauty and classic grace in nature as much as in the reliques of ancient art— and this from the character of the man seems more than probable. In truth, I know not from what contemporary lecturer he could have drawn those notions of classic beauty and serene severity which he so early imbibed.

In whatever mode Banks obtained his instruction as a sculptor—for Kent it must be known made designs only on paper, and never ventured to model or carve—he showed that he was no novice when the doors of the Royal Academy were first opened: —such were the merits of his models that they obtained him the instant notice of Sir Joshua Reynolds and the general approbation of the academicians. It is true that the new student was no raw and inexperienced youth; at the time when the Academy was instituted he had reached the mature age of thirty-three—was a husband, and, I believe, a father—and had fixed his own notions of what was worthy of his ambition, and shown examples of his genius to the world.* The liberality of his

* The following premiums had been awarded to him by the Society of Arts between 1763 and 1769—the subjects are not

father and the portion of his wife, (a — Wooton by name, and co-heiress of certain green fields and flower gardens which have now been turned into the streets and squares of May Fair,) enabled him to pursue his profession without hiring himself out as an assistant to some sculptor more eminent or more lucky than himself—and I cannot help considering this as a very fortunate circumstance. To apprentice one man of genius to another that he may learn the trick and routine of his art and acquire a mastery over its materials, would be wisdom—were he to learn these things and no more: but he has to work in the fashion, and think in the spirit, of one whose genius is most likely of another order than his own, and, in twenty cases for one, by the time he has gained the desired skill of hand, he has lost for ever the chance of being an original artist. No master-spirit, perhaps, need fear even this probation of slavery; but all degrees of talent beneath the first rank should dread the ascendancy of other minds.

Banks was lucky in being the first of the students of the Royal Academy who obtained the decided approbation of Reynolds. If he was not exactly a worshipper of Michael Angelo, he was what the President considered as the next best—an enthusiastic admirer of the antique: and ere much time elapsed Sir Joshua pronounced him the first British sculptor who had produced works of classic grace, and said "his mind was ever dwel-

described. For a basso-relievo in Portland stone, thirty guineas; for a basso-relievo in marble, twenty-five guineas; for a basso-relievo in marble, ten guineas; for a model in clay, twenty guineas; and for a design for ornamental furniture, twenty guineas.

ling on subjects worthy of an ancient Greek." In the year 1770 he received the gold medal—a reward which the Academy gives to merit of the first class, and for which there were many candidates: he also exhibited two designs from the Æneid, both representing Æneas bearing Anchises from the flames of Troy—but in different positions and with change of sentiment. The gold medal made his name known publicly, and these classic works confirmed the judgment of the Academy, for they display no slender share of that grave simplicity and heroic bearing for which so many of his after-works were remarkable. In the following year he exhibited a cherub hanging a garland on an urn—a common subject with sculptors; and the bust of an old man—one of the living models of the Academy: both of which found admirers in those barren times. His next work had higher merit. This was his group of Mercury, Argus, and Io—which was so much approved of, that the council unanimously voted him worthy of being sent to Rome at the expense of the Academy.

This enthusiastic man soon prepared himself for the journey, and his young wife, whom he ardently loved, resolved to accompany him. He received the official instruction—to observe and study all that was noble in ancient and modern art; and Reynolds admonished him to worship constantly in the Sistine: but he had made up his mind to love and imitate only such works as were created according to his own spirit. At this time he was residing in a modest house in Bird Street, Oxford Road, where he had a small gallery and studio; and conceiving that his younger brother, Charles, possessed

talents of no common kind in the same line, he had persuaded him also to become a sculptor, which he did with such success, as to grow at length one of the most skilful workers of marble in the island. By the rules of the Academy, his period of foreign study was fixed at three years, and a salary of some fifty pounds per annum assigned for his support; but he had other resources;—he had earned money before his departure—his wife's portion was not exhausted, and his mother also, for his father was now dead, gave him some assistance. He took with him some favourite sketches—a few letters of introduction, as well as those official ones furnished by the Academy, and arrived safely in Rome, in August, 1772, in the thirty-seventh year of his age.

At that time Rome overflowed with English, both artists and gentlemen of taste and fortune; among the former class we may mention Romney, who rose to the distinction of dividing the approbation of London for a month or so with Reynolds; and among the latter, Townley, the celebrated collector of the fragments of the ancient masters. But the most important personage of all was Gavin Hamilton, a Scottish painter—a gentleman by birth, one who had seen much of the world, and in his own person experienced the caprice of fashion. For many years he stood at the head of art and taste in Rome; and the gentle urbanity of his manners, and the readiness with which he exerted his influence in favour of all aspirants in painting or sculpture, secured him the good word of men of all nations. He had befriended Reynolds, Wilson, West, Fuseli, and Nollekens, and was now as ready

to befriend our sculptor when he made his appearance with the sanction of the British Academy, and what was still more important, with some of those poetic sketches which the pages of Homer can so abundantly supply. Banks instantly commenced his studies. He was chiefly attracted by the splendid specimens of Grecian genius with which Rome is crowded, and pondered over the reigning character of those noble works, making drawings and taking measurements with a neatness and precision not then very common among English artists. He confessed that all the visions of excellence which had ever visited his dreams were now realized before his waking eyes—that the antique sculpture fairly transcended all that he had conceived of it, and that in the heroic style of art rivalry with those magic marbles was more than hopeless.

Banks was sparing of speech, but not frugal in correspondence: and some specimens of it may be worth preserving, were it but to show how little of poetry this poetic-minded man infused into his writings. In a letter to a friend in London, dated Rome, July 31, 1773, he says, "Among the students in painting, Fuseli cuts the greatest figure: last season he had pictures bespoke to the amount of thirteen hundred pounds, good encouragement for a student, yet nothing more than from his great abilities he is justly entitled to. Little Wickstead has had most of the portraits to paint here last season, owing to the endeavours of Messrs. Norton and Byres to carry every gentleman they could get hold of to see him: but Barron arriving, and having great merit in the portrait way, and a

good correspondence with the gentlemen, got so many portraits to paint as proved no small mortification to the aforesaid gentleman as well as his helpers. Barron is a young man of very conspicuous merit—has the most of Sir Joshua's fine manner of any of his pupils, and it is beyond a doubt that when he returns to England he will cut a great figure in his way." The latter of these meddling antiquarians, mentioned by Banks, is the same uncandid person, who, with his insinuations and intrigues, ruined the peace of poor Barry during his Roman studies, and here again we find him working in his vocation and plying the same dirty trade. The sculptor was luckily out of the influence of these busy bodies. He was no manufacturer of pictures, like Barron; no dealer in terracottas, mutilated marbles, and new paintings smoked old, like the antiquarians themselves; nor had he a turn for controversy, like Barry: he was a shy, proud man, who carried himself a little loftily, and had a soul above all that is unworthy of a gentleman.

Banks, we are told, was anxious to be initiated into the mystery of working marble with the chisel, and now took lessons from that Capizzoldi whom I have mentioned in the life of Wilton. From this it plainly appears that he had not been familiar with the chisel before he left England, or at least had not acquired the ease and mastery which are the offspring of long use. There is nothing more beautiful in the whole range of art than to see a skilful person hold the chisel upon a piece of fine sculpture—to observe the perfect confidence with which one hand guides the tool while the other

gives the blow, and this in places requiring such neatness and delicacy of handling, that the smallest slip would be fatal, and a button weight of more than the proper force maim the marble for ever. Banks was not insensible of the value of a skilful man's instructions: "Your good friend, Capizzoldi, has been truly kind to me;" he thus writes to Smith, who introduced him, "he has improved me much by the instructions he has given me in cutting the marble, in which the Italians beat us hollow." This reproach, if just then, is no longer merited; from the studios of British sculptors much exquisite workmanship is constantly sent into the world, rivalling in softness and delicacy, and surpasssing in vigour, even the marvellous marbles of Canova.

To the Sistine Chapel Reynolds had directed Banks, as he directed all others; but this is a course of study which the students of all nations seem loth to undergo. Travellers seldom find a young sculptor modelling there. All unite in re-echoing the praises which Reynolds and Fuseli poured forth so lavishly on the miracles which Michael performed in that place—all agree that these groups are the grandest of all human compositions—but few, very few, show the sincerity of their admiration by attempting to imitate them. Let no one assign as a reason that they are in character too sublimely grand for imitation or study; to the figures of the Apollo and the Venus people flock as to a shrine,—round them artists continually plant their easels and modelling stools; and they are at least not inferior to the works of Michael Angelo. The spirit of exaggeration visi-

ble in so many of the great Florentine's works was sure to captivate such an imagination as Fuseli's; but the sedate glories of the antique speak home to the bosoms of all mankind — and these were the creations that arrested the whole soul of our sculptor.

Of the many memorandums which Banks made concerning ancient art, none have been preserved save the following account of the Venus de Medicis:—

"This divine statue, having been broken in several places, displays now the left arm from the elbow, and right arm from the shoulder, of modern composition. In these lie the only defects of this otherwise perfect figure, for the wrists and fingers are evidently too small for the other corporal proportions. These faults have arisen from the erroneous notion that small legs and arms are beauties in women, whereas those parts being more fleshy than in men, must in nature be thicker in proportion to the size of the body. Some connoisseurs have also thought this elegant figure round-shouldered, because the back from the nape of the neck is rounder than where that beautiful part is distorted into a straight line by unnatural bandages.

"This love-inviting Venus stands on one leg only, which inflates the principal muscle, while it depresses another into a beautiful dimple. Indeed, were the figure scrutinized by square and compass, the mathematician and anatomist must receive equal satisfaction with the connoisseur.

"The modest elegance of her attitude is well known from the numberless casts of this admired

statue in every country—but her face has beauty and expression so happily combined, that at first sight one sees she is conscious of her exposed state. The face is truly Grecian, having a straight line from her forehead to the end of her nose; her mouth is small, and the hair is tied in a graceful knot behind a small but elegantly shaped head. It is to be lamented that the marble of this figure is not of that fleshy whiteness which so delicately characterizes the Apollo of Belvidere."

Such are the words in which Banks expressed his feelings concerning this incomparable statue, and it must be confessed, that however well he could imitate the excellence of the divine image in marble, he has made sad havoc of her loveliness with the pen. It is indeed but a memorandum, and perhaps a hasty one. Byron, we would almost believe, was aware of the cold inventory of Banks, when he exclaimed in presence of the Venus—

"I leave to learned fingers, and wise hands,
The artist and his ape, to teach and tell
How well his connoisseurship understands
The graceful bend and the voluptuous swell:
Let these describe the undescribable:
I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream
Wherein that image shall for ever dwell:
The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam."

The fruit of all this travel and study was now about to become visible. From British history Banks took the subject of Caractacus and his family in the presence of Claudius—from Grecian fable, Psyche stealing the golden flame—and from his own imagination, a figure emblematic of Love

seizing the human soul—or in other language, Love catching a moth or butterfly. The first of these is a relief, wrought in marble—which exhibits both nature and dignity; it was purchased by the Marquis of Buckingham, and is now to be seen in the entrance hall of Stowe; the second was intended for a portrait of the Princess Sophia of Gloucester, and is still in her family; the third, the most lovely of all, was carved in marble, in the size of small life, and was considered in Rome as a work of first-rate merit, but it could not find a purchaser. I am pained to read this, for there is not much exaggeration in the words of his gentle biographer, that "perhaps for grace, symmetry of form, and accuracy of contour, it has scarcely been equalled by a modern hand, and might almost vie with those productions of the ancients to which his admiration as well as emulation had been so constantly directed."

These fine works brought Banks great fame but slender profit—and he began to grow weary of the Eternal City. His three years allowed by the Academy were expired, and four had been added to them; and during all that time he had found little patronage. Even from his own countrymen such favours did not flow freely. An artist of their own land embodying in marble the fictions of poetry and the images of history, was something so new that they could not be sure whether he was creating them in a proper spirit or no; they had gone to Rome to purchase antiques—at least such things as wear the hue and seem to have experienced the mutabilities of the true progeny of Phidias—and they did not choose to lay out their

money on works which could not by any chance be old. As for the Italians they are too poor, or too proud, to purchase what is not of their own making; it is their business to lay on England through art a heavy tax—rivalling in amount the famous Peter's Pence of old. They, therefore, had purchased none of Banks's marbles—when after a residence of seven years in Rome, he at length resolved on returning to London.

His fame now justified him in commencing on his own account, and he accordingly leased a house in Newman Street—constructed a gallery and a studio, besides a workshop, wherein to rough-hew his marbles—and begun:—but the time was not propitious, or the sculptor was too impatient. He made a two years' trial, indeed, of the public favour, but Nollekens, with his portraits, and Bacon with his groupes, swept away all the patronage which the metropolis at that time seemed disposed to bestow on sculpture. The poetic taste of Banks was exercised in vain—and, vexed in spirit and wounded in dignity, he resolved to seek in a far and, at that time, demi-savage country, what he had failed to meet with in his own. "Not finding his talents," says his only daughter, "sufficiently appreciated at home on his return from Italy, he determined on making a trial of Russia, where he had very favourable prospects held out to him by the court." This was about 1784, when he was forty-nine years old. He had already given proofs of talents which threw all rivalry into the shade till the appearance of Flaxman—no wonder that he hearkened to foreign promises and imperial allurements. At this time the

throne of all the Russias was filled by that wonderful woman who, after dethroning a capricious husband, and acting no gentle part in the domestic tragedy which darkened the beginning of her reign, surprised her people by the justice and wisdom of her administration, confounded her enemies by the movements of fleets and armies, and pointed out that road to Constantinople which has lately been trod by one of her descendants. The splendour of imperial patronage dazzled Banks, and taking with him some of his best works, he bade farewell to his wife and daughter, and sailed for St. Petersburgh. He was no unwelcome visitor—Catharine, having purchased his Cupid and Moth, placed it in a temple built on purpose in her gardens at Czarscozelo, and the Russian princes and nobles at least praised the taste of their empress, if they were slow in imitating her generosity.

Banks soon perceived that he had quitted a cold country for a colder—I mean really as well as figuratively. The sudden change from sunshine to frost, and from flowers to snow, affected his health, and though the empress was kind, and her courtiers polite, the love of poetic sculpture had not become anything like a national passion—Military pageants, balls, reviews, interposed between the sculptor and the success which he merited; and it is further said, that the religious feelings of this grave and good man were not a little shocked at the gross and profligate debauchery of a most licentious court. Be that as it may, he seems at first to have imagined that all would go well in health, as well as in sculpture; he wrote encouraging letters home, talked of establishing himself permanently in Pe-

tersburgh, and desired to have the company of his wife and daughter. Catharine could not but see that he felt disappointed; but it was perhaps no alleviation to his feelings that she gave him an historic subject to do into stone;—and such a subject—The Armed Neutrality! How he acquitted himself in this imperial puzzle cannot at present be known; he made his escape, I believe, in allegory, and explained with words what the marble failed to convey. This was a far different occupation from that of embodying the heroes of Homer; and as he probably expected to be called upon to do into stone the last treaty with the Turk, he pleaded sinking health—departed from Petersburgh, and appeared most unexpectedly before his wife, whom he found fully prepared to commence her voyage to Russia.

Banks had been absent some two years; the love of poetic sculpture had grown no stronger here in his absence; he resolved, nevertheless, to pursue it, and trust to fortune. In this mood he imagined and modelled one of his noblest works; the Mourning Achilles. He found the figure in that passage in the first book of the Iliad where Briseis is forced away, and the enraged hero complains to his mother Thetis. The words, in Cowper's version, are these:—

> "Loath she went
> From whom she loved, and looking oft behind.
> Then wept Achilles, and, apart from all,
> With eyes directed to the gloomy deep,
> And arms outstretched, his mother suppliant sought."

The heroic beauty and natural vigour of this poetic statue have been noticed by many; in fine

action and noble proportions nothing here has yet excelled it. Praise was poured upon the artist from all quarters; some loved it because it was classic—others because it was natural, and more because the sentiment of sorrow was largely diffused from the face over the figure. He was justly proud of this noble work, and proceeded to remove it from Newman Street to the exhibition rooms in Somerset House. The packing and removal of sculpture is at all times attended with danger; and so it proved in this instance, for the waggon was overturned in the street, and the Mourning Achilles shivered into five hundred pieces. Banks, who accompanied the carriage, witnessed the destruction of his figure — the work of a whole twelvemonth was lost in one moment—and as he depended upon it for establishing his name, all hopes of future celebrity for the moment vanished. He returned home, and such was his command of temper—his philosophic —I ought to say devout—resignation under this calamity, that neither his wife nor daughter observed that anything unfortunate had happened. He returned to the exhibition room, collected the scattered fragments of his work, and, assisted by his younger brother, pieced it patiently and skilfully together, and restored the Mourning Achilles to its original beauty. He then communicated what had happened to his wife. The statue was luckily in plaster of Paris, and therefore more easily mended; for no skill could have restored a work in marble—no cement has yet been discovered capable of uniting transparent materials, without making the junction dark or opaque.

Mr. Johnes, of Hafod, was so much pleased with

this statue, that he desired to have it copied in marble, for the entrance hall of his house in Cardiganshire. A block was bought, but the patron changed his mind and suggested another subject, or adopted one which Banks proposed—Thetis dipping the Infant Achilles. But the classic purity of the sculptor's taste could not fail to be grievously offended when the head of Mrs. Johnes was proposed for the shoulders of Thetis, and that of her infant daughter for those of Achilles. He began to see that, whatever the nominal subject might be, portraiture was the aim, and how to reconcile the English, or rather Welsh character of face with the established lineaments of old Greece, he could not well divine. The visible nature before him, and the feeling that he had to work to pattern in the faces, oppressed his fancy a little. Still the group was one of high merit. The execution too was beautiful. He had not studied under Capizzoldi in vain. It was placed over a magnificent vase in the conservatory of Hafod. Henceforth no more was heard of the Mourning Achilles in marble for this then opulent patron. His own head would have made but an indifferent one for the hero; and his vanity, the sculptor's opinion on that point once ascertained or guessed, was little interested in the matter. So it remained, and now remains, in plaster, in reproach of our want of feeling for works of a poetic order. On the death of Banks his widow presented the statue to the British Institution, and it now stands in the hall of their gallery, as a warning to all sculptors who enter, that works of classic fancy find slender encouragement here.

Banks loved the company of Johnes, and was a frequent visitor at Hafod. The translator of Froissart had sense enough to value the approbation of a man of genius—he was pleased with the simplicity of his character, the grave dignity of his manners, and delighted in showing him over the picturesque scenery of the domain. In the summer months the sculptor was sure to be found amongst the hills and vallies of Cardigan; nor were his visits unconnected with art—he executed several works—none of them indeed in character equalling the Thetis and Achilles—and superintended their erection. He conversed with Johnes upon ancient art, made sketches, imagined others, read passages in Froissart, and so the time passed on. In after-years a fire, which levelled Hafod House with the ground, consumed many works of the sculptor.

To this period his group of Thetis and her nymphs ascending from the sea to condole with Achilles on the death of Patroclus, must be assigned. It is an oval, in alto-relief, less than half the size of life; and embodies that graphic passage thus Englished by Cowper.

"So saying, she left the cave, whom all her nymphs
Attended, weeping, and where'er they passed,
The parting billows open'd wide a way.
At faithful Troy arrived, in order fair
They climbed the beach, where, by his numerous barks
Encompassed, swift Achilles sighing lay.
Then drawing nigh to her afflicted son,
The goddess with a piercing shriek his brows
Between her palms compressed."

That he has deeply felt this fine passage cannot be denied; yet to me the figure of Thetis, and like-

wise the forms of her companions, are, amidst all their beauty, longer in proportion than they ought to be; their extent of leg and thigh is enormous. But the buoyant ease with which they make their way from the waves, and the graceful elegance with which they sail into upper air, and surround as with a garland the mourning hero, disarm all censure, and leave little admiration for the Achilles who has cast himself down on the shore, and seems resolved on not being comforted. From the smallness of its dimensions, and the variety of beauty which it contains, this little work has become very popular, and is to be found in the studies of all our chief artists.

These and other works of genius obtained for Banks, soon after his return from Russia, the rank of Academician. It is customary, on this honour being conferred, to present a work of art to the Academy; that which he gave was the figure of a fallen Titan, two-thirds the size of human life. The giant is represented stricken or thrust headlong down from heaven—a rock following his fall has crushed his foot—and he lies prostrate, struggling in his torture. It has been admired for its anatomical beauty, as well as for the grandeur of the conception; but to be fully felt it must be considered in connection with a work of far greater grasp, though of very small extent, from the same hand—a representation in relief of the battle between Jupiter and the Titans. It is ten or twelve inches long, some seven inches high, and comprized in an oval; yet it is wonderful to see the genius, not unmixed with absurdity, which he has displayed in that small space. Heaven is above—the

earth is beneath; in the former all the gods and goddesses have come forth, while Jupiter, seated in the centre, personates not inaptly these noble lines,—

> " And from the middle darkness flashing out,
> By fits he deals his fiery bolts about;"

he holds a thunderbolt in his right hand, and with his eye fixed on the victim, seems ready to launch it. The god appears not to have taken up the matter a moment too soon. Beneath him a sea of gigantic forms lie crushed and weltering—yet some who have survived their brethren are preparing with enormous rocks to pile up a way from the mountain tops to heaven. Against these the right hand of Jupiter is lifted, and all the conclave of heaven sit composedly watching the result. The interest of the scene is not, however, above—it lies wholly below. There we see no unworthy image of that scene of desolation described so sublimely by Milton, where Satan and his companions are cast into hell, confounded though immortal—the linked thunder and the wrath of God pursuing still. We also see the germ of the Fallen Titan itself. Looking at both, we cannot refrain from lamenting, that a man capable of such things should have mourned away three-fourths of his life over disappointed hopes. To denote perhaps the little alarm which this gigantic attempt excited above, Mars is represented wooing Venus; and to show what blundering engineers those Titans were, one of them is exhibited with an enormous scaling ladder approaching the clouds.

He was soon to be employed on a work of a

very different character, a domestic monument, of a kind happily allied, through the deep feeling which the subject excites, to poetry. This was the monument to the only daughter of Sir Brooke Boothby, now in Ashbourne Church, Derbyshire; she was six years of age, and the sculptor has imagined her on her couch asleep in all her beauty and innocence. "Simplicity and elegance," says Dr. Mavor, "appear in the workmanship—tenderness and innocence in the image. On a marble pedestal and slab, like a low table, is a mattress, with the child lying on it, both likewise in white marble. Her cheek, expressive of suffering mildness, reclines on the pillow, and her little fevered hands gently rest on each other near to her head. The plain and only drapery is a frock, the skirt flowing easily out before, and a ribbon sash, the knot twisted forward as it were by the restlessness of pain, and the two ends spread out in the same direction with the frock. The delicate naked feet are carelessly folded over each other, and the whole appearance is as if she had just turned in the tossings of her illness, to seek a cooler or an easier place of rest." The marble perhaps will not quite support in every particular this glowing account—the precision of the dress hurts the simplicity of the idea, and the trim and carefully knotted sash agrees ill with the clutched and fevered hands of the suffering sleeper. The monument is very affecting, and awakens maternal feelings deeply.

Around the pedestal the learning of the afflicted father scattered melancholy mottoes in Latin, Italian, French and English. This idle parade cannot indeed detract from the merits of the work—

few who look upon it will seek to know more than what the marble figure tells—it speaks all languages, and its words are, "I died young and pure, and my spirit is with the blessed." The English portion of the inscription fixes dates and adds names. "To Penelope, only child of Sir Brooke and Dame Susannah Boothby, born April 11, 1785, died March 13, 1791. She was in form and intellect most excellent. The unfortunate parents ventured their all in this frail bark, and the wreck was total." Those who sympathize with such bereavement will read, without any change of mood, the lines which the father addressed to the artist.

"Well has thy classic chisel, Banks, expressed
The graceful lineaments of that fine form,
Which late with conscious living beauty warm,
Now here beneath does in dread silence rest;
And oh! while life shall agitate my breast,
Recorded there exists her every charm,
In vivid colours safe from change or harm,
Till my last sigh unaltered love attest.
That form, as fair as fancy ever drew,
The marble, cold, inanimate, retains;
But of the radiant smile that round me threw
Joys that beguiled my soul of mortal pains,
And each divine expression's varying hue,
A little senseless dust alone remains."

The exhibition of this touching work occasioned much sensation in Somerset House. It was placed in the middle of the room, and obtained the notice of hundreds of mothers—the queen and the princesses stood looking at it for some time and were affected to tears. Sir Brooke Boothby, as may be well supposed, watched the progress of the piece under the hand of the sculptor, and Banks, feeling

how much it would be criticised by his brethren, bestowed all his skill upon it, finishing the more important parts with his own hand. Though far from being his best performance, this simple monument has done more to spread the fame of Banks through the island than all his classic compositions.

His next piece was of a different kind—the monument to Woollett, the engraver, erected in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey. It is partly real and partly allegorical, and labours hard to tell the story of the subject in a poetical way. It would only deceive those who have never seen the original, to say that the sculptor has succeeded. The work is in bas-relief, and represents Woollett in his morning gown, busily employed engraving a sheet of copper on a table—on his left hand appear Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, applying apparently to have their works engraved, and on his right hand Genius is instructing the children of the land in this popular art, while Fame stands over the whole and blows her trumpet. This mixture of shadow and substance is common in our monuments; those medley works, like mixed metaphors, are manufactured upon every public occasion; and when the committee of national monuments demand designs, fifteen out of twenty of the rival sketches are sure to be of this nature. It is no uncommon thing to see a man standing on a monument in regimentals—his Genius as large as himself on one side—his Wisdom comforting him in the shape of Minerva on the other—and his Valour busy in the battle-field with sword and buckler. This is multiplying a hero after the fashion of Kehama, and making him do four duties at once.

When the Shakespeare Gallery was established by Boydell, he prevailed on our sculptor to model a work that should stand without, and tell what might be expected within. His performance may be now seen in its original place in Pall-Mall; and no one can say the alderman's object has not been obtained, for Shakespeare is there, seated on a rock (with less ease to himself than what was necessary,)—Painting and her palette on one hand of him—and Poetry with harp and wreath on the other. There is nothing remarkable in the design; but the execution is worthy of the name of Banks—he was no hurried labourer for daily hire—he was more covetous of fame than of money, and sent nothing hastily from his hands, trusting his name to more elaborate compositions.

As he never had extensive employment, he found abundant leisure for increasing his sketches, already numerous, and noting passages from the classics for future use, should opportunity offer. But his chief delight for many years was in the instruction of his only daughter, Lavinia; she sat beside him whilst he modelled, accompanied him in his walks, and in the evenings cheered him with music, of which he was passionately fond. He superintended her education in all things, and more particularly in drawing. He caused her to make drawings from plaster models; insuring by this means a knowledge of the bounding or external line, which rules quantity and commands character. On paper with the pencil he himself always found a difficulty in delineating his ideas, but the moment he took up clay all obstacles vanished. When any of his sketches pleased him more than usual,

he expanded it into one a degree larger, and so on till it grew into a model fit for working from; and this he executed in marble. In this way his sketches were multiplied in number — those he thought best of he dried and baked in an oven— some he cast in plaster and moulded, and gave the casts to friends.

The friends of such a man may well be supposed to have been numerous; among the most distinguished were Flaxman, Hoppner, and Fuseli, and a gifted man of a far different stamp, John Horne Tooke—of whom Banks modelled a bust— a work which he was not unwilling to rank above its merit. He was a frequent visitor at the Wimbledon levees, where many who desired to be thought wise, and witty, and learned, attended. The friendship with "Parson Horne" had nearly done Banks a mischief. During those perilous days, when "revolution," and "liberty and equality," were putting wise men mad, such suspicion fell upon the politician as subjected him to an official examination and a trial—and the sculptor, whose offence consisted at most in listening to the other's declamations, was implicated in the charge. "I remember," says the artist's daughter, "when Tooke and Hardy and others were arrested on a charge of high treason, that an officer waited upon my father with an order from the Secretary of State to go to his office. I chanced to be in the next room, and the door being partly open, I heard all that passed. My father only requested to be allowed to go into his study and give directions to his workmen; this was complied with, and he then accompanied the messenger. I said nothing to my mother of what I

had heard, since my father had been silent for fear of exciting unnecessary apprehensions: but I sat with much trouble at heart during several hours, when to my inexpressible joy I heard his well-known knock at the door, and ran to greet his return—a return rendered doubly happy, since his own simple and manly explanation had acquitted him of all suspicion of treasonable designs or of a thought injurious to his country."

About the same time he modelled a bust of another eminent man infinitely more injuriously dealt with in his own day than John Horne Tooke—the celebrated Warren Hastings, whom Burke, in the reckless violence of party spirit, had nearly spoken down into everlasting infamy. Banks said he modelled the heads of Tooke and Hastings from the love he bore to their noble looks. For the latter he often expressed the highest reverence, saying, in the fine manly cast of his features, and more particularly in the uncommonly grand form of his forehead, there was more akin to his notions of some of the great men of antiquity than in any living head he had ever met with.

It is certain that the sculptor was touched, and that not a little, with the splendid theories of human liberty which Philosophy loves to dream, and, given to the hands of grosser men to carry into practice, sees them, to her sorrow and her misfortune, turned into systems of civil anarchy or military despotism. His notions, however, were never carried further than theory—and it was practical men, not visionary philosophers, whom the government dreaded. Indeed he was as little likely to offend in the matter of speech as in action, for

he was remarkably taciturn—speaking little, and seldom without being spoken to first. The suspicions, however, which were attached to Banks's name during those stormy days, materially injured his practice, nor did the prejudice die away till the atrocities of the French had put schemes of revolution out of fashion among all lovers of justice, virtue, and freedom.

It is pleasing to turn from the agony of politics to the repose of sculpture. The genius of Banks did not receive, as I have before said, the sanction of his country; the character of his mind must therefore be sought more in the works which he sketched than in those which he was encouraged to mature in clay and fix in marble. Among his sketches the poetical abounded, and these were founded chiefly on Homer. His Andromache lamenting with her handmaidens over the body of Hector—his Venus rising from the sea, shedding back her tresses as she ascends—and a Venus bearing Æneas wounded from the battle—are splendid things. His chief favourite of all the heroes was Achilles. I have already mentioned two pieces in which he is introduced, and there are others even of superior merit—they are, however, both sketches—something rude, as all his sketches are, but full of that heroic feeling which made Flaxman his ardent admirer. The first I allude to is Achilles arming amidst his Myrmidons. He is represented placing on his head that helmet which was never soiled with dust:

"..... Wide all around
The champaign laugh'd, with beamy brass illumed,
And tramplings of the warriors on all sides

Resounded, amidst whom Achilles armed;
He gnashed his teeth, fire glimmered in his eyes,
Anguish intolerable wrung his heart,
And fury against Troy, while he put on
His glorious arms, the labour of a God."

The second is nobler still; the subject—that angry parle between Agamemnon and Achilles in the opening of the Iliad. The latter, indignant at the insults and injustice of the former, turns half away—clasps his sheathed sword to his bosom with his left hand—grasps the hilt with his right, and bending looks of death on Agamemnon, seems half inclined to strike him to the dust.

". . . . . Achilles' bosom swelled
With indignation; racking doubt ensued,
And sore perplexed him, whether forcing wide
A passage through them with his blade unsheathed,
To lay Atrides breathless at his feet,
Or to command his stormy spirit down;
So doubted he, and undecided yet,
Stood, drawing forth his falchion."

Nothing of sketch kind have I ever seen finer than Banks's imitation of the fierce Achilles of this noble passage:—he stands the concentrated spirit of heroic hatred; his helmet on his brow, his broad shield at his back, and his arms folded scornfully over his bosom.

Many of his sketches are of a softer kind. It must be owned, indeed, that some of them have a leaning to the outré and the extravagant—there is a portentous length of body about many of his ladies, even surpassing the longitude of his Thetis, and there is moreover a deficiency of just proportion which would incline us to number them

amongst the works of his youth. But there is a natural beauty of sentiment which will ever redeem those rude attempts from being called lumps of clay. One is entitled Maternal Instruction—A mother—a portrait, I imagine—is seated in an easy-chair—an open book is on her knee, into which a little eager boy is anxiously looking, evidently unable to read a single word, while the matron has turned her head aside to a daughter—a girl, some eighteen years old or so, and of surpassing beauty and innocence—listening to, and weighing what she is repeating. A second sketch represents Cupid fondling Psyche—a subject so much in request that hundreds are manufactured, and yet the market is never overstocked. A third exhibits the Muse inspiring a Hero—a new subject and poetically handled—but the sketch is very rude. A fourth, a warrior king falling mortally wounded over an altar—the figure is entirely naked, the posture free and unrestrained, and it seems as if he had offered himself as a sacrifice. I have not been able to trace its origin with certainty. A fifth is a Nymph mourning over a dead dove—there is a melancholy grace in the sketch—a full-size figure, created in the like spirit, would be a touching thing. There is likewise a Venus with her hand held over her brow—exquisitely lovely.

"He was (says his daughter) a minute observer of nature, and often have I seen him stop in his walk to remark an attitude, or some group of figures, and unconsciously trace the outline in air with his finger as if drawing paper had been before him. He would in the same way remark folds of drapery and note them in his mind, or sketch

them on paper, to be used when occasion called." Himself a maker of sketches never to be expanded into mature works, he sympathized with others who were running the same vain race in heroic art. His daughter often marvelled at his patience in pointing out the imperfections or the beauties of drawings and models submitted by others to his inspection. Even when little hope of future excellence appeared, he was careful not to wound the feelings of a race whose sensitiveness he too well knew. He would say "This and better will do—but this and worse will never do;" and ended by recommending industry and perseverance. One morning a youth, some thirteen years old or so, came to the door of Banks with drawings in his hand. Owing to some misgiving of mind, the knock which he intended should be modest and unassuming was loud and astounding, and the servant who opened the door was in no good mood with what he imagined to be forwardness in one so young. Banks, happening to overhear the chiding of his servant, went out, and said with much gentleness, "What do you want with me, young man?" "I want, sir," said the boy, "that you should get me to draw at the Academy." "That," said the sculptor, "is not in my power—no one is admitted there but by ballot, and I am only one of those persons on whose pleasure it depends. But you have got a drawing there—let me look at it." He examined it for a moment, and said—"Time enough for the Academy yet, my little man! go home—mind your schooling—try to make a better drawing of the Apollo—and in a month come again and let me see it." The boy

went home, drew and sketched with three-fold diligence, and on that day month appeared again at the door of Banks with a new drawing in his hand. The sculptor liked this drawing better than he did the other—gave him a week to improve it—encouraged him much, and showed him the various works contained in his study. He went away and returned in a week—the Apollo was visibly improved—he conceived a kindness for the boy, and said if he were spared he would distinguish himself. This augury has been amply fulfilled. Mulready is now an academician—and his name has flown far and wide.

Banks had long desired to introduce a more poetic style of art into our national monuments; but he was growing old before the wish was gratified, and it would have been no worse for his fame, I apprehend, if that had never happened. He thought he could compound the matter between the plain and visible realities of life and the loftier conceptions of poetry—impart that dignity which the Muse sheds over her creations, to the heroes of the last gazette—and, in short, do for Britain what the sculptors of old did for Greece, when they furnished her temples and towns with gods and with warriors. He had to work, I am afraid, for a far less imaginative people; and probably feeling this, he tried a style of composition of a mixed nature, which wants alike the dignity of the ancient, and the palpable act-of-parliament reality of modern art—and so, possessing the full charm of neither, pleases few. The works to which I allude are the monuments to Sir Eyre Coote in Westminster

Abbey, and to Captains Westcott and Burgess in St. Paul's Cathedral. The former was ordered by the East India Company—the latter by the Committee of Taste for His Majesty's government. They may be briefly described. To Sir Eyre Coote, victorious over the French and Hyder-Ally, Victory is represented raising a splendid trophy, and decorating it with the portrait of the chief, while a Mahratta captive sits bound beside a heap of rich Asiatic armour, and an elephant is near to aid in fixing the scene in the East. Captain Burgess fell in the battle of Camperdown, and to him the sculptor makes Victory present a sword. Captain Westcott perished in what Nelson called the Conquest of the Nile—and Victory crowns him, as he falls, with laurel.

There is a sore want of variety in these three monuments: Victory appears thrice—she raises a trophy, she presents a sword, and she crowns with laurel. There are no crowds of figures and emblems; all is plain and simple,—yet with so few figures no sculptor ever contrived to give more offence. The two naval officers are naked, which destroys historic probability; it cannot be a representation of what happened, for no British warriors go naked into battle, or wear sandals or Asiatic mantles. As little can it be accepted as strictly poetic, for the heads of the heroes are modern and the bodies antique: every-day noses and chins must not be supported on bodies moulded according to the godlike proportions of the Greek statues. Having offended alike the lovers of poetry and the lovers of truth, he next gave offence to

certain grave divines, who voted that the small line of drapery which drops over the shoulder as far as the middle of Captain Burgess,

"In longitude was sairly scanty,"

like the drapery of the young witch of the poet: Banks added a handbreadth to it with no little reluctance. When churchmen declared themselves satisfied, the ladies thought they might venture to draw near—but the flutter of fans and the averting of faces was prodigious. That Victory, a modest and well-draped dame, should approach an undrest dying man, and crown him with laurel, might be endured—but how a well-dressed young lady could think of presenting a sword to a naked gentleman went far beyond all their notions of propriety.

Those, however, who can forget or overlook such errors of conception will find much to admire in these monuments. The Mahratta captive is praised by artists for its fine anatomy, and by the world for its finer expression; the principal figures on the other monuments only want heroic heads to be worthy of the genius of the sculptor; and in the accessaries there is strict historic propriety. The monument of Westcott was finished in 1805, and with it closed the professional labours and life of the artist: he died on the 2d of February, 1805, in the seventieth year of his age, and was buried in Paddington churchyard.

In Westminster Abbey a tablet is erected with this inscription:—"In memory of Thomas Banks, Esq., R.A., Sculptor, whose superior abilities in the profession added a lustre to the arts of his country, and whose character as a man reflected

honour on human nature." The querulousness of criticism can abate nothing of the force of these expressive words—a more ample account of the man, and a fuller character of his works, may, however, be acceptable. In person he was tall—with looks silent and dignified, and an erectness of carriage which became him well: he spoke seldom—had a winning sweetness in his way of address, and a persuasive manner, which was not unfelt by his academic companions. He was simple, and frugal in his general style of living, yet liberal to excess in all that related to the encouragement of art—his purse was open to virtuous sufferers—and, what is far more, he shrank not from going personally into the houses of the poor and the sick, to console and aid them in their adversity. In his younger days it was his custom to work at his marbles in the solitude of the Sabbath morning, when his assistants were not at hand to interrupt him: but as he advanced in life he discontinued a practice which even the profane will not openly commend—and became an example to his brother artists in professional abstinence during the seventh day. He grew strict in religious duty, and, like Flaxman, added another to the number of those devout sculptors whose purity of life and reach of intellect are an honour to their country.

He was an admirer of Hoppner, and continued his affection till the last hour of life: his regard too for Cosway was great, and he loved to look over his valuable collections of animal drawings: with Fuseli he was very intimate—he admired his genius and enjoyed his wit—the painter sat by the sculptor as he modelled and watched the clay

assuming the shape and port of the gods and heroes of his favourite Homer—but his chief favourite was one worthier still—John Flaxman. Mutual pursuits in art—mutual purity of life—and mutual feelings of devotion begat a strong affection between them, which continued uninterrupted till death. That Flaxman felt his genius and honoured it, he was ever ready to give strong proof. "We have had a sculptor," he says in one of his lectures, "in the late Mr. Banks, whose works have eclipsed the most if not all of his continental contemporaries." On another occasion—that of the sale of the sculptor's models—Mrs. Siddons and Flaxman were seated together, when the auctioneer began to expatiate on the beauty of an antique figure which stood beneath his hammer, saying, "Behold where the deceased artist found some of his beauties." "Sir," exclaimed Flaxman, more warmly than was his custom, "you do Mr. Banks much wrong—*he* wanted no assistance."

His admiration of the antique though excessive was not exclusive—he extended his regard to Gothic sculpture, and made many fine casts from figures in Westminster Abbey. When Guildhall was modernized some thirty-five years ago, two fine old Gothic figures which adorned the building were taken from their pedestals and consigned ignominiously to the rubbish. The poetic eye of Banks detected beauties invisible to the citizens in those mouldering stones—he was permitted, through the influence of Alderman Boydell, to remove them: he restored the injured parts, and placed his two Gothic beauties in the best light in his studio. At

his death they were purchased by Mr. William Bankes, a gentleman whose talents and attainments are well known; they are remarkable for the natural simplicity of the drapery, and still more so for their fine attitudes.

During the latter years of his life, when his daughter no longer required his instruction, and had removed, with the instruments of music that had been used to please him during the evenings, to the home of her husband, Banks began to form a collection of the drawings and engravings of the old masters. On this he spent much time and much money. The collection—a valuable and extensive one—is now in the keeping of his daughter, Mrs. Forster. Of its worth no one was more aware than Sir Thomas Lawrence; and as he was an admirer of the genius of Banks, he had less difficulty in prevailing with his daughter to permit skilful tracings to be made of those fine drawings. The whole, or the greater part, were sent to him; "All of which he scrupulously returned," says Mrs. Forster, "save some by Albert Durer, which, at my request, he selected to keep. In return for this, he gave me last summer a most lovely portrait of my eldest daughter, drawn in his finest style. He told her it would be the last he should ever attempt, for he found it injurious to his eyes to draw objects much less than the size of life. He also sent me with an engraving from his picture of Mr. Locke's son—a very small drawing of his own—done when he was about eight years old. Under it was written, in a child's hand, "Thomas Lawrence, Devizes"—and in his own hand, at the time

of sending it, "Done when *three weeks old*, I believe."*

* "Of Sir Thomas's opinion of those drawings (continues our sculptor's daughter) you will like perhaps to know something. In a letter dated 21st April, 1826, he says, "To live in the past is, I suppose, the common destiny of advanced life; but I can truly say, that from the very earliest days of youth (I might almost have said childhood) these relics of the great masters have had attractions for me, and at fourteen the study of the large prints of Georgio Mantuano's, from Michael Angelo, led me to make drawings of colossal size from 'Paradise Lost,' in which, unless I greatly err, I should even now find some degree of merit. But I am writing to one who needs no explanation of the origin of feelings which she herself shares with me, and which are part of the legacy of genius left her by her lamented parent, of whom we often talk with the just admiration of his powers, and as deep regret at the too slight encouragement extended to them. The drawings have arrived safe. The three which perhaps I most admire are a drawing of a couple of Torsos by Michael Angelo, with some of his writing—a drawing (profile) of a female head with pen by Raffaele, with at the farther side of the drawing a study in chalk of drapery. These, with a sheet of limbs by Michael Angelo, are what I chiefly like—'covet' not being a word in our vocabulary. 'The finding of Moses by Pharaoh's Daughter' is rather, I think, a copy from one in my possession, from which the print was taken. A very good drawing is assigned to Titian, which, I believe, is by Annibal Carracci. Several of the drawings are very interesting. The Raffaele, with a group from the cartoon of 'The Draught of Fishes,' accompanied by a print, which, I believe, is by Battista Francois, is, I fear, not the original drawing—where that is I know not. It has been very popular, for I have now seen three copies of it. One from the Duke of Alva's collection was offered to me about three years ago, and with the print. I have forgotten to mention a drawing of heads in red chalk by Michael Angelo, which I like very much, and a small drawing by Raffaele of a virgin and child. There are others very good, but not all, I fear, by the masters to whose names they are assigned. Drawings by Raffaele, Michael Angelo, and Par-

The merits of Banks as an artist are very high. He was the first of our native sculptors whose aims were uniformly lofty and heroic, and who desired to bring poetry to the aid of all his compositions. The proofs of his genius, however, must not be sought in those magnificent tasks called public monuments, where the subject-matter is prescribed, and where perhaps the most that talent can hope for is to escape censure; those who would have access to his happier inspirations must study his sketches—rough it is true, and somewhat repulsive to those fastidious about delicacy of finish, but full of heroic feeling, and marked with a vigour and serenity of sentiment akin to the wondrous marbles of Greece. In these the man comes fully out: we see that he had surrendered his whole soul to those happier days of sculpture in which the human frame was free and unshackled, and the dresses as

megiano, are now become very scarce: there are some drawings of theirs here of the finest character—but all are not, I apprehend, by those great masters that are marked. I was gratified to learn that your mother, Mrs. Banks, had improved in health, and was still with you. I fear I am hardly enough acquainted with her to offer my respects to her, but you will, I know, convey them, if my high esteem for her daughter and admiration of Mr. Banks give me a claim to that extent. Alas for Bonnington!—your presage has been fatally verified—the last duties have been paid to him this day. Except in the case of Mr. Harlowe, I have never known in my own time the early death of talent so promising, and so rapidly and obviously improving. If I may judge from the later direction of his studies, and from remembrance of a morning's conversation, his mind seemed expanding every way, and ripening into full maturity of taste and elevated judgment, with that generous ambition which makes confinement to lesser departments in the art painfully irksome and annoying."

well as deeds of men were heroic; that the bearing of gods was familiar to his dreams—and that it was not his fault if he aspired in vain to be the classic sculptor of his age and nation. But the cold welcome which his poetic groups and statues received from his country prevented him from expanding them into the size of life, and working them in enduring materials. The page of the poet—even the canvass of the painter—is immortal—compared to the clay or plaster sketches of the sculptor. Too tender to brook handling, they lose a beauty at every touch, and a finger or a head at every removal; and when the hand which made them can protect them no more, they are scattered by auction amongst a thousand people, and disappear gradually from the mantelpiece and the gallery.

I wish that Banks had turned from the poetry of Greece to that of England, and found subjects in the pages of Spenser, Shakespeare, or Milton: he might not even then have become, in the usual sense of the word, popular; but he would have obtained a wider approbation, and left works behind him sure of forming the delight of some more tasteful generation, yet unborn.

JOSEPH NOLLEKENS.

The life of Joseph Nollekens has been written at great length by an ungentle executor; but justice requires a story more honourable to his memory. His father was Joseph Francis Nollekens, a native of Antwerp, and a painter by profession; his mother's maiden name was Mary Anne Le Sacque; he was born on the 11th of August, 1737, in Dean Street, Soho, London, and baptized at the Roman Catholic Chapel, in Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. He was the second of five children, and came of a race of artists; his grandfather, a painter of some note in his day, visited England in his youth, and finally settled in France; and his father was so far successful in his profession that his paintings are still distinguished by his name, and bring no discreditable price at public sales. "Old Nollekens," for so his father is called by Walpole and by auctioneers, was an avaricious man—reputed rich, and being a foreigner and of the old faith, his house, during the rebellion of 1745, attracted the notice of a devout mob, who proclaiming a crusade against all opulent Catholics, were with difficulty diverted from attacking and plundering the painter. He made his escape with his treasure, and dying soon after, left his son, Joseph, to the affection of his widow.

But the lively French woman growing weary of her weeds, presently bestowed her hand on a Welchman, who carried her away to his native mountains.

The early death of his father, and the hasty marriage of his mother, were unfavourable to the education of young Nollekens. He was always an indifferent reader—had no notion of spelling or grammar; all that adhered to him of his boyish lessons was arithmetic; wherein, indeed, no one ever suspected him of being deficient. He went early to the study of sculpture—attended the drawing school of Shipley, in the Strand, where the Society of Arts held their first meetings—and in his thirteenth year was placed in the studio of Scheemakers, in Vine Street, Piccadilly. By whose counsel he was sent there cannot now be known—the studio of Roubiliac would have been a far preferable place.

Nollekens was considered in those early days a civil and inoffensive lad—devoted to his profession—enthusiastic but not very bright—and so honest that Mrs. Scheemakers, a vigilant housewife, declared she could even trust him to prepare the raisins for her pudding. He was passionately fond of drawing and modelling, and laboured early and late to acquire knowledge in his profession—yet he was so free of all pride, or so obliging by nature, that he would run on any errand—nor did he hesitate to relate, in the days of his wealth and eminence, how he used to carry pots of porter to his master's maids on a washing day, and with more success than Barry when he treated Burke, "for," said he, "I always crept slowly along to save the head of foam that the lasses might taste

it in all its strength!" Such traits as these, however, I cannot consent to set down as incontrovertible proofs of a mean and vulgar spirit; nay, they often keep company with real loftiness of nature.

Joseph rose early, practised eagerly, and as his powers expanded, became a candidate for the prizes offered to rising genius by the Society of Arts. This has been imputed to his avarice; but there are few artists who have not contended for premiums or for medals, and how shall we estimate motives? Is it noble emulation in one—and a sordid thirst of gain in another? Whatever his motives were, of his success we are certain. In the year 1759, the Society of Arts gave him a premium of fifteen guineas for a group of figures in clay—in 1760 they presented him with thirty guineas for a bass-relief, and during the same year ten guineas more for a model in clay of a dancing Faun. He was then in his twenty-third year:—his quiet, mild, inoffensive looks, and the undoubted cleverness of his works, gained him considerable notice amongst the dispensers of premiums in the Society of Arts. Garrick, by profession an observer of character, put down Joseph in the notebook of his memory.

His mother, we have said, followed her new husband into Wales, and Nollekens had no relation in London in whose house he could set up his models and sketches. In the shop of Scheemakers the quiet and ungainly youth had never wanted persecutors in the vulgar and the malignant, and now when he began to obtain distinction and bear away the prizes from students of more mark and pretension, the vexation increased daily. He was

subjected not only to insulting words, but to practical and mischievous jokes; and he had neither vigour of body nor sarcastic acidity of tongue to protect him and make him respected. Eager to escape from all this, and also to improve himself in the knowledge of his art, he in the year 1760 proceeded to Italy, taking Paris by the way. On arriving in the French capital, he presented himself at the house of an uncle there, told his name and claimed kindred. The old gentleman stood with his door half opened, put a few cool questions, and seemed to doubt the veracity of his story—but at length catching a glimpse of a gold watch chain, invited him to dinner. The pride of the young artist, however, had been deeply touched—he declined the invitation and went on his way.

On reaching Rome, the friendless youth found his stock reduced to some twenty guineas, and dreading want, and what was worse, dependence, set about mending his fortune with equal despatch and success. He modelled and carved in stone a bass-relief—the subject has not been named—which brought him ten guineas from England; and next year his purse obtained a larger reinforcement—the Society of Arts voting him fifty guineas for his Timoclea before Alexander, which was in marble. He was now noticed by the artists of Rome, and lived on friendly terms with Barry, who was waging an useless and vexatious war with interested antiquarians and visitors of wealth and vertù. Indeed such was the gentleness of his nature and his mild and unassuming demeanour that he never made enemies, except amongst those who could have done no one credit as friends.

One day Garrick came into the Vatican, and observing Nollekens, said, "Ah! what? let me look at you! You are the little fellow to whom we gave the prizes in the Society of Arts? eh!" The sculptor answered "yes;" upon which the actor shook him kindly by the hand, inquired concerning his studies, and invited him to breakfast next morning. He did more—he sat to him for his bust, and when the model was finished gave him twelve guineas. "The payment was all in gold," said Joseph in his old age, "and it was the first bust I ever modelled." He always spoke of the great actor with very friendly feelings. Sterne likewise sat to him at Rome, and the bust, which is in terracotta, and a truly admirable image of the wit, materially increased his reputation. Indeed the applause which it obtained probably warned the sculptor where his strength lay. To the last hour of his life he alluded to it with pleasure. "Dance (he used to say) made my picture with my hand leaning on Sterne's head—he was right." This striking bust is now in the collection of Mr. Agar Ellis.

But Nollekens—short while as he had yet lived in the world, and unobserving as he seemed—was aware of an easier mode of making money than by the painful and laborious process of evoking it with his chisel from marble. The son of a race of picture-makers knew there was an art in selling old sculpture as well as in carving new; and as he had no rich friends to support him during his studies, he was obliged to seek the means of subsistence as he best might. With a spirit for bargain-making which matched the devotees of vertù, and

with skill such as few of them possess for ekeing out fragments, adding heads to busts and bodies to heads, and communicating to the new the hue of the old, he went to market—and his success was considerable.*

"His patrons," says Smith, "being characters professing taste and possessing wealth, employed him as a very shrewd collector of antique fragments; some of which he bought on his own account; and after he had dexterously restored them with heads and limbs, he stained them with tobacco-water, and sold them sometimes by way of favour for enormous sums." There was, for instance, a loose head of Minerva that even Englishmen would not purchase, which lay on the hands of one Jenkins, a regular dealer in the article. It so chanced that a trunk of the same, or some other goddess,

* During Mr. Nollekens's residence at Rome," says Smith, "he purchased, among other articles by which he made considerable sums of money, numerous pieces of ancient Roman terracottas, some of exquisite taste, from the labourers who were employed in digging gravel at Porta Latina; they were mostly discovered at the bottom of a dry well, and must evidently have been placed there for security. Nollekens, who bought them for a mere trifle, sold them upon his arrival in England to Mr. Townley, and, together with that gentleman's marbles, they have been purchased by government, and are now let into the walls of the first room of the gallery of the British Museum. Independently of the graceful figures which are introduced in several of these compositions, the foliated ornaments are extremely light and beautiful." He nevertheless retained some of the best of those early purchases; and when he met with any of the terracottas of Michael Angelo or John di Bologna, he bought them for his studio, that he might be constantly in the presence of works from the hands of his favourite masters.

was brought to light, and Nollekens bought it for fifty guineas. He went and held a consultation with his brother-dealer—the head and the trunk were of similar proportions, and the sculptor undertook to unite them as neatly as if they had both sprung from one block. To work he went, and Minerva soon stood restored. "It was sold," says his executor, "for the enormous sum of one thousand guineas, and is now at Newby in Yorkshire."

He found liberal patrons amongst his countrymen who annually migrated to the capital of Italy. The most distinguished were Lord Yarborough, Lord Selsey, and the Earl of Besborough. The former was a nobleman gentle as well as generous —a lover of literature and a rewarder of merit— who encouraged rising worth, and became its friend wherever it was found. For him Nollekens executed in Rome and in England "many considerable works," says Smith, "in marble, for which he received most liberal and immediate payment." Of these the Mercury, and Venus chiding Cupid, are the best. The money which he acquired, meantime, was treasured prudently away—the artist knew that his profession was expensive—the price of marble great—the rents of proper studios and shops high, and that a considerable capital was needed by any one who desired to work as he wished, and lead rather than yield to the public taste. When a boy he had become acquainted with privation—and made an economist by necessity, he continued his system of saving when his rising fame and increasing wealth might have dispensed with it. All accounts represent him as living at Rome in a very different manner from

most young men there similarly circumstanced. His lodgings cost him little, and his favourite dinner was what he delighted to extol long afterwards under the name of Roman Cuttings—viz., the prunings and parings of meat drest with salt, pepper and flour, which, with a slice of bread, some vegetables, a cluster of grapes and a glass of wine, sufficed for prudent Joseph. He never seemed to suspect that some might consider his prudence as meanness. Upon one of his saving stratagems he particularly piqued himself—this was smuggling silks and laces into London in the hollow of his plaster casts. Long afterwards he pointed out his head of Sterne to Lord Mansfield, and said, "There, my lord, do you know that bust held my laced ruffles that I went to court in when I came from Italy!"

After ten years of profitable study in Rome Nollekens returned to London, and resolving to commence on his own account, took a lease of extensive premises in Mortimer Street—formerly the residence of Newton, a painter of no great note, the secretary to the Royal Academy. Here he formed a private studio for himself—a shop for assistants, and a gallery for models. His long residence amongst the great works of art prepared many to expect much from him; the busts of Sterne and Garrick had reached his native land before him; and he no sooner opened his doors than orders came in abundance. The splendid talents of Reynolds had brought portraiture into fashion, and Nollekens profited by this public feeling. Sitters appeared to the amount of four in a day—his unassuming manners, quiet looks, and simpli-

city, approaching to childishness, helped him on, nor, with all his simplicity, was he wanting in worldly wisdom. The "R. A." behind an artist's name has a magical effect on his works, and this Joseph well knew: he therefore smoothed the way to the Academy by presenting a fine cast of the Torso; and was admitted an associate in 1771. In the following year he was elected a member, much to the satisfaction of the King, who signified this when he signed the diploma—and soon afterwards honoured the artist by sitting for his bust.

Nollekens at that early period stood well in the esteem of the world both as a man and an artist. Those habits—or rather fits—of saving and sordidness, which darken so deeply the narrative of his executor, had not then appeared in all their force—there was nothing about him or his studio to mark him as mean or miserly—his establishment, if not splendid, was respectable, and his assistants were paid even more generously than was then the practice with other sculptors. It pleased him indeed to have his dinners plain, and to allow no extravagance in his household; but the moderation of his meals might have been a constitutional matter. Lord Byron was not necessarily a miser because he chose to dine on potatoes and vinegar; and he who disdains to look closely after the economy of his house and the habits of his servants, would require some more assured source of income than the works of his own hands.

He modelled the busts of his Majesty and Dr. Johnson—our sculptor loved to tell of the condescension of his royal sitter, and his assistants as readily treasured all that occurred concerning the bust of Dr. Johnson, which he executed about the

same period. "When I was modelling the King's head," said Nollekens, "I was commanded to go to Buckingham House at seven in the morning, for at that early hour his Majesty shaved. After he had shaved himself, and before he had put on his stock, I made my model. I set him down to be on a level with myself, and the King, seeing me go about him and about him, said 'What do you want?' I said, I want to measure your nose; the Queen tells me I have made the nose too broad. 'Measure it then,' said his Majesty."—It is said that the sculptor hurt the royal nose with his sharp callipers, and failing to appear next morning at seven o'clock, his Majesty said; "Nollekens is not come—O, I forget, this is a saint's day, and he is a sincere Catholic." The sculptor was not so laudably employed as in religious observances. On the following morning he went to the palace. "Well, Nollekens," said the indulgent monarch, "where were you yesterday?" "Why," answered the sculptor, "as it was a saint's day, I thought you would not have me, so I went to see the beasts fed in the Tower; and do you know they have got two such lions there! and the biggest did roar so! My heart how he did roar!" And then, it is said, he imitated the roar of the lion so loud as to compel the King to remove to the other side of the room. These traditions must be received with caution—the sculptor, desirous to keep his sitter in a familiar and easy mood, suitable to his task, talked away he did not well heed what, and more intent on his subject than careful of his speech, probably made many mistakes in both courtesy and taste. He, however, made a good bust, and

by an accidental turn of the modelling cloth, supplied himself with capital drapery—better, he was often heard to say, than he had ever made for any other bust.

Such are the traditions respecting the bust of the King—those concerning the sittings of Samuel Johnson are not of a very intellectual order, for the great critic had conceived no lofty notion of the art of "face-making," as one of the old limners calls it—to say nothing of Nollekens himself, whom he looked upon as little better than a kind of machine. The doctor came one day accompanied by Miss Williams—the lady was blind, and he did not see well, and moreover was impatient of the protracted sittings, and desired to be with his books and his pen. He came late therefore—which so exasperated the sculptor that he cried out, "Now, Doctor, you *did* say you would give my bust half-an-hour before dinner, and the dinner has been waiting this long time." "Nolly, be patient Nolly," exclaimed the sage, making his way to the bust. "How is this, Nolly, you have loaded the head with hair?" "All the better," said the artist; "it will make you look more like one of the ancient sages and poets—I'll warrant now you wanted to have it in a wig." The wise man wagged his head—growled out, "Bow-wow-wow," and strode to the dinner table. "The bust," says Smith, "is a wonderfully fine one, and very like, but certainly the sort of hair *is* objectionable, having been modelled from the flowing locks of a sturdy Irish beggar, who, after having sat an hour, refused a shilling, saying 'I could have made more by begging, God bless your honour.'"

Of this remarkable bust Johnson said, "It is

very like me, and there can be no doubt that the sculptor has great skill in his art—yet it is amazing what ignorance of certain points one sometimes finds in a man of eminence." Some one praised Banks once in the presence of Johnson, and inferred that he was superior to his brethren. "Well, sir," said the sage, "much of what you say may be true, but I think my friend, Joe Nollekens, can chop out a head with any of them." Soon after the bust was finished, Mrs. Thrale accompanied Johnson to see it. "Doctor," exclaimed the artist, to whom the lady was a stranger, "I like your picture by Sir Joshua very much. He tells me it's for Thrale, a brewer over the water; his wife's a sharp woman—one of the blue stocking people." "Nolly, Nolly," cried the doctor, "I wish your maid would stop your inconsiderate mouth with a *blue* bag." "My dear sir," whispered Mrs. Thrale, "don't shoot arrows at a block of marble." These traditions are of a humble order—they accord with the intellects of those who recollected them, and we must be thankful. In the opinion of a very eminent judge, with whom I lately conversed on this subject, this bust of Johnson is the cleverest that Nollekens ever produced.*

* The doctor remonstrated seriously as to the hair, saying, "a man, sir, should be pourtrayed as he appears in company" —but the sculptor persisted. It was the practice of Roubiliac to model his heads without wigs, as witness those fine ones of Pope, Bolingbroke, Mead, and Frewin: Chantrey too has been audacious enough to take the like freedom with some of the chief dignitaries of the church—two archbishops of Canterbury, and a bishop of Durham, who was bald, and could ill spare such covering, are standing in his gallery without their wigs, to the astonishment of many a sound divine.

Whilst these and other works were in progress, Nollekens was paying his addresses to Mary Welch, the daughter of a magistrate—a young lady of beauty and attainments, whose charms, it is reported, made such an impression on Doctor Johnson, that long afterwards he was heard to say; "Yes, I think Mary would have been mine if little Joe had not stept in." The great moralist was then so well stricken in years, that we may suppose this exclamation was rather ironical than serious. Be that as it may, the lady was wooed and won, and though we have, in the courtesy of biography, called her young, our readers must not suppose that she was some unripe and unexperienced maiden whom the persuasive tongue, or more persuasive talents, of the artist had induced to forsake the roof of her father. She was of a mature age—could discern between the merits of a pennyless sage and a wealthy artist, and so gave her hand to Joseph. *She* was straight and tall, with long light-coloured hair, which fell down in ringlets to her middle. *He* was short and ill shaped, with an aquiline nose and bandy-legs. She was proud, (her looks were what her husband expressively called *scorney*), and on the day of her marriage was attired in brocaded silk, with a stomacher set in diamonds—an elegant point-lace apron—her hair raised high upon a cushion—silken shoes with spangles, and narrow heels three inches high, and a bouquet of rose-buds in her bosom; her marriage wardrobe cost two hundred pounds. Nor was Joseph himself meanly attired on this great occasion. He wore a suit of Pourpre de Pape—silk stockings striped blue and white—his

hair dressed in curls over a large toupee, and the identical lace ruffles which he had smuggled from Rome.

This marriage was not an unhappy one. They used to walk lovingly together every Sunday morning as far as the corner of Mortimer Street, where they parted—Joseph proceeding to the Catholic Chapel, and the lady to the Parish Church. Mrs. Nollekens had the sense seldom to interfere in her husband's professional undertakings—he allowed her to reign in undisturbed dominion in all domestic matters; and, disagreeing seriously in nothing, they agreed in one material point—namely, that to see money accumulate, is one of the chiefest pleasures of human life. The lady had brought him some fortune, and Nollekens himself was supposed to have already amassed twenty thousand pounds, and the whole of this was now laid out at interest, prudently secured. The expense of his domestic establishment could scarcely be said to have increased under the economic eye and bargain-making tongue of this new intendent; she seldom spread her table for a friend, and on Sundays escaped from the dread of intrusive company into some cheap tea-garden, where staid and homely citizens brought the materials for tea, and had hot water boiled at the rate of a penny a-head. Had he happened to find a partner whose notions were less contracted, Nollekens might probably have appeared to more advantage in after life; for he was not without good qualities—and, as it was, showed flashes of generous feeling far more frequently than some are willing to allow.

As a member of the Academy, he had the privilege of exhibiting eight works of art annually;

he began to exhibit in the year 1771, and in the course of five years had only sent in thirteen subjects, six of which were busts, the others statues and groups. A marble statue is of slow growth—it has to be conceived, sketched, modelled, cast in plaster, rough-hewn, and carved; and this requires much consideration and time, and no little drudgery. His groups and statues were those of Bacchus, Venus taking off her sandal, Hope leaning on an urn, Venus chiding Cupid, Juno, Pætus and Arria, and Cupid and Psyche. The portraits were excellent, and generally there was a gentleness in the expression, and a gracefulness in the handling, which could not fail to please. The likenesses of the busts were acknowledged, the prettiness of the statues felt; but there was an absence of original vigour—vital loftiness of soul was wanting, and there was nothing to show that, with a new name in sculpture, a new and peculiar spirit had appeared. All that he had brought back from Rome was a desire to continue the creation of gods and goddesses, without the power of stamping them with freshness of sentiment, or new grandeur of form. His chief strength lay in bust sculpture, and in this he was successful beyond all his predecessors—his studio became a kind of fashionable lounge for those who thought their heads of importance, either to their friends or the country; and with his own hands to model, and those of two assistants to carve, he kept pace with the public demand.

His sitters, and the ladies in particular, were much amused with the simplicity of his manners, with the good-natured bustle into which he put himself on their appearance, and more than all

with the oddity of his observations. It is evident that not a few of those titled dames considered him merely as a curious original, whose conversation might help them in the great business of killing time; but others were charmed into admirers by the downright bluntness of his compliments, which they regarded as so many testimonies on oath of their beauty, for it never entered their heads that this singular man might, in common, affect a boorish roughness of address expressly that his occasional courtesy might carry double weight. As a specimen of his skill in the difficult task of pleasing, take the following anecdote. He was modelling the head of a lady of rank, she forgot herself, changed her position, and looked more loftily than he wished; "Don't look so scorney," said the sculptor, modelling all the while, "else you will spoil my bust—and you're a very fine woman—I think it will make one of my very best busts." Another time he said to a lady who had a *serious* squint, "Look for a minute the other way, for then I shall get rid of that slight shyness in your eye, which, though not ungraceful in life, is unusual in art." On another occasion a lady with some impatience in her nature was sitting for her portrait —every minute she changed her position, and with every change of position put on a change of expression; his patience gave way. "Lord, woman," exclaimed the unceremonious sculptor, "what's the matter how handsome you are if you won't sit still till I model you!" The lady smiled and sat ever afterwards like a lay figure.

His profession has dealings with the dead as well as with the living. The domestic sculpture

of England is often of a pure and impressive kind; our churches are filled with manifold tokens of the esteem of survivors living for the virtues of the departed—and some of these are of a most costly kind. Of such commissions Nollekens had an ample share. Many of them indeed cannot be considered as works of art, but as marble carved per contract, emblazoned with heraldry and symbols, and explained by means of inscriptions, which are sometimes very indifferent interpreters. A sculptor whose commissions are extensive, has frequent opportunities of reading a chapter of poor human nature. "A lady in weeds for her husband," says Smith, whose redundancies I venture to lop, "came drooping like a willow to the sculptor, desiring a monument, and declaring that she did not care what money was expended on the memory of one she loved so. 'Do what you please —but oh! do it quickly,' were her parting orders. Nollekens, went to work, made the design, finished the model, and began to look for a block of marble to carve it from, when in dropt the lady—she had been absent some three months 'Poor soul,' said the sculptor, when she was announced, 'I thought she would come soon—but I'm ready.' The lady came light of foot and lighter of look, saying, 'Ah! how do you do, Mr. Nollekens? Well, you have not commenced the model?' 'Aye, but I have though,' said Joseph, 'and there it stands, finished.' 'There it is, indeed,' sighed the lady, throwing herself into a chair; they looked at one another for a minute's space or so—she spoke first. 'These, my good friend, are, I own, early days for this little change,' she looked at her dress,

from which the early profusion of crape had disappeared: 'but since I saw you I have met with an old Roman acquaintance of yours, who has made me an offer, and I don't know how he would like to see in our church a monument of such expense to my late husband. Indeed, on second thoughts, it would perhaps be considered quite enough if I got our mason to put up a mural tablet, and that you know he can cut very prettily.' 'My charge, madam, for the model,' said the sculptor, 'is one hundred guineas.' 'Enormous, enormous!' said the lady; but drew out her purse and paid it."

On another occasion a lady, whose husband had perished in battle, applied through a peeress in London, for designs for a monument to be raised on the field where he had fallen. They were made and forwarded: three weeks had elapsed when the friend of the widow made her appearance in the sculptor's studio, with displeasure in her face. "What is to pay for these sketches," said she, returning them all, "be so good as tell me what your charge is, and I'll have you the money though I should go to law for it." "Nothing," said the sculptor, "I charge nothing for what is not approved of." "You *must* charge, and you *shall* charge," exclaimed the lady, "you know not how *she* has served us. When my weeping friend got your designs, she looked first at them, and then at the drawing of a new equipage, and having considered for a moment whether she should raise a monument to her husband or buy a new coach to herself, she—I have not patience to tell you what she has done;—say ten pounds, I'll make her

pay it, and if you won't take it, to the poor of the parish it shall go." The sculptor was obstinate, and so was the lady; the money was obtained and dedicated to a charitable purpose. Anecdotes of the same kind might be multiplied.

When public favour smiled on Nollekens he remembered his early companions, and took Nathaniel Smith into his employment, a workman of some skill, whose son's life of our artist has already been often quoted. "Upon the death of my mother," says this authority, "in 1779, Mr. Nollekens, upon seeing some of my attempts at wax-modelling, kindly invited me into his studio. At that time my father was his principal assistant, and there I was employed in making drawings from his models of monuments, assisting in casting, and finally, though in a very unimportant degree, and with the humblest talents, in carving. I was entirely supported by my father; I never received the slightest remuneration from him, though whilst I was with him I have often stood as his model. He once indeed gave me three boxes of black chalk, but it was grown so grey and rotten by time, that I told him it was useless, upon which he said, 'Well, never mind, I shall give you cause to remember me in a better way.'" Smith, no doubt, conceived his labours to be worthy of remuneration, but any one acquainted with the practice of professional men must know that large fees are given by youths for leave to draw and model in the studios of eminent sculptors; Nollekens probably thought that the stripling Smith was well rewarded by obtaining the facilities of the place.

Nollekens, it seems, used to take this youth as his companion when he made his visits, and communicated to him, as he went along the streets, many curious particulars about men and manners, and the state of London when he was a child. Anecdotes of artists were sometimes intermingled. He went with the sculptor to the sale of Hudson's prints and drawings, and there he saw Sir Joshua Reynolds, who, after expatiating to a friend on the extraordinary powers of Rembrandt, one of whose prints was that moment sold, proceeded to observe that the effect which pleased him most in all his own pictures, was that displayed in his Lord Ligonier on horseback; the chiaro-scuro of which he found, he said, in a rude wood-cut upon a halfpenny ballad on the wall of St. Anne's Church, in Princes Street. "When I was a little boy," said Nollekens, "and lived in Dean Street, there were no fewer than four ambassadors in Soho Square, and at that time it was the most fashionable place for the nobility." He loved, during these excursions, to talk of himself and of his early undertakings. When he approached one day the house formerly occupied by his old master, Scheemakers, he stood still, and said, "There, Tom, there—it was in that house over the way that I got the first print I ever possessed in my life." He then proceeded to relate that he saw in the bar of the public-house Pesnes' engraving of the Death of Eudamidas, by Nicholas Poussin, and wishing to possess it, told the landlord, who had sailed with Admiral Vernon, that he would give him in exchange a large engraving of the siege of Porto-Bello. The old seaman was pleased with the name

—said he was willing, and Nollekens, purchasing the print for a shilling, received the Poussin in exchange, and with that engraving commenced his collection of a series of the prints after that distinguished master. He was so fond of Poussin, that he has been accused of resorting to him for the attitudes of monumental figures and groups, and likewise for draperies. "Poussin's draperies," says Smith, "was so highly esteemed by him, that he frequently adopted them; as this painter's drapery falls well, mostly in grand and broad folds, it is unquestionably the easiest for carving, having no flutter; which is a style not only troublesome to execute in marble, but extremely expensive to cut, and bad in effect when accomplished." Little of Poussin, however, whether we look to sentiment, shape, or arrangement of drapery, can be traced in the works of Nollekens; and a gentle flutter in a fold occasionally adds much to the beauty of drapery; it is besides natural, nor is it so materially different in cost of workmanship as has been represented.

The marriage of Nollekens brought him into intercourse with a coterie of clever ladies, two of whom were members of the Royal Academy: to wit, Miss Moser, skilful in painting flowers, sarcastic when she held the pen,—and the more celebrated Angelica Kauffman, whose charms once inveigled Reynolds into a flirtation which lasted five minutes, in the front of one of the boxes of the theatre, and who ended with marrying a discarded footman, whom she mistook for Count Horn. Now Fuseli was admired by Miss Moser, and Angelica Kauffman was beloved by Fuseli; and as

Mrs. Nollekens was not encumbered with the cares of a family, she found leisure to sympathise with her friends, and a confidential intercourse was established over a cup of tea and a moderate supper. Dr. Johnson too was a visitor—he generally appeared about once a week, and when the door was opened to the thunder of his knocks, announced himself effectually by growling out, "Is little Nolly at home—is little Nolly at home?" The company of Johnson, or even of Miss Moser could not be enjoyed as they deserved by one so illiterate and so unenlightened as Nollekens; but he was a good listener and a pleasant man, and sometimes came sliding in with a saying worth laughing at. Johnson, with great good-nature, talked about art; and Angelica Kauffman, while Mrs. Nollekens was soothed into mildness of mood, painted her in the character of Innocence with a dove, for which her husband gave fifteen guineas.

If we are to credit the picture which Smith has drawn of their domestic economy, the sculptor and his wife were passing frugal people. On one occasion when a select party was expected, the table spread, and an unwonted roast making ready, a loud knock was heard at the door, followed by the scraping of feet, and a drudging kitchen-wench, as brown as a desert—whom her master's assistants called Bronze—approaching her mistress, whispered "All the Hawkins's are in the dining-room!" "Nolly," said the perplexed lady, "this is the way we are always served when we dress a joint—surely you wont ask *them* to dinner?" "I ask them!" exclaimed the artist, "I'll not encourage that sort of thing—let them get their meals at home—or

they may go to Mathews's—they'll find the cold leg of lamb we left yesterday." This formidable invasion of all the Hawkins's was repelled, good humour restored, and Bronze, with a significant wink and wave of her hand, carried Smith—who had been standing as a model for a naked Mercury —into the dining-room to see the preparations.

"The scanty display," says this friendly biographer, "for so many persons astonished me. I shall endeavour to describe the 'Spread,' as it is called at Cambridge. Two tables were joined; but as the legs of the one were shorter than those of the other, four pieces of wood were prepared to receive them. The damask tablecloth was of a coffee colour, similar to that formerly preferred by washers of court ruffles. The knives and forks matched pretty well; but the plates, of queen's ware, had lost some of their gadrooned edges, and were of unequal sizes. The dinner consisted of a roasted leg of pork; a salad with four heads of celery standing pyramidically; mashed turnips neatly spooned over a large flat plate to the height of a quarter of an inch, and lastly, there was a large lobster. The side dishes were a chicken and rein-deer's tongue, with parsley and butter, but the boat was without a ladle, and the plate hardly large enough for it to stand in. Close to the seat of Mrs. Nollekens stood a dumb waiter with cheese, a slice of butter, a few water-cresses, and a change of plates and knives and forks. Seven sat down—there were no challenges to wine—nor do I think it was mentioned till the servants were ordered to take off." Having described the dinner, the same historian furnishes the conversation.

"My dear Nolly," said the mistress of the feast, "you had no occasion to have wasted the writing-paper for the claret; for as it is the only bottle with a tall neck, we should have known it: my dear Mrs. Paradise you may safely take a glass of it, for it is the last of twelve which Mr. Caleb Whiteford sent us as a present; and any body who talks about wine should know his house has ever been famous for claret." "Now, don't crack the nuts with your teeth, Miss Moser," said Nollekens, interrupting his wife, "else you'll spoil them." "And what would Mr. Fuseli say to that?" slily inquired another guest. "Say," said the lively lady, "why he would, in his usual classic manner, say, 'She may break them, and be damned!'"

In these frugal entertainments and frivolous gossippings something of the man and nothing of the artist is seen; but in truth Nollekens was great no where save in his studio with his clay and his marble. In company he was frequently exposed to the sarcasms of Barry; and Fuseli set him up as a sort of target to shoot his wit-bolts at. All this and much more he endured,

"Wrapt in rich dulness, comfortable fur,"

and seemed to think with Shakespeare, "If a man will be beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him." He had that happy equanimity of temper that nothing in the shape of satire could disturb. But in the practice of his profession he was sometimes annoyed by the suspicious curiosity of his wife, who imagined that he had genius equal to the task of making his figures from fancy alone, without those grosser aids to which artists

generally resort. When he was modelling his goddesses he had the help of living figures, and Mrs. Nollekens was not without fears that her husband might on such occasions forget himself, as Raphael is said to have done. She was sorely troubled. "One morning," says Smith, "a very handsome woman came with a basket and butter to the door, and Nollekens, according to his custom, answered the knock. When he saw this beautiful creature he said, "Come in, my dear, who sent you to me?" "No one, sir," said the woman, "my friends tell me I have a knack at modelling in butter, and I have brought some pigs and sheep to show you." "Come in," said the artist, "this young man is my pupil, and he wont say a word about it." "I am a housekeeper," said the stranger, "in want of a situation, and hearing that the knowledge of modelling animals in butter might be a recommendation, I have made bold to bring something of the sort." The sculptor, who was gazing on her—measuring her in his mind for a variation of a Venus—was interrupted by his wife. "Surely, sir," said she, "you are no pastry-cook—what have you to do with modelling in butter? the neighbours will say you have taught Mrs.—what's your name, my good young woman?" "Wilmot, madam."—"Mrs. Wilmot to model in butter! Pray are you married, Mrs. Wilmot?" "I cannot say that I am, madam." "Mr. Nollekens, let me speak to you in the next room." The sculptor followed his incensed spouse, upon which this female worker in butter said to Smith, "She is jealous—my good looks are against me." Mrs. Nollekens presently

returned, dismissed her handsome visitor, and was observed to watch afterwards to see if her husband desired to improve the acquaintance.

He was, in common with almost all mankind, an admirer of that meritorious performer, Punch, and in raptures with the Milkmaids' Dance on May-Day; a neighbour asserted that one morning he had no less than five garlanded nymphs dancing under his window, to each of whom he gave half-a-crown. His wife considered this great extravagance, and her wrath was kindled to extremity when she recognised one of the ladies, who sat as models for his Venuses, dancing with a garland in her hand, and the sculptor applauding and rewarding her. The door opened, and Mrs. Nollekens entered. "I wonder," exclaimed she, "that a man like you, who can obtain Opera orders and see Vestris, should sit strumming with your feet to the dancing of these creatures. See, the landlord of the Horse-Shoe and his wife are laughing at you—Finney, your brute of a mason, and John Panzetta, the polisher, are laughing in their sleeves. How can you expose yourself so? I wish Dr. Burney would come in—or Miss Hawkins either—poor as her ear is for music, and whose playing distracts one to hear—even she could not be pleased with such strains as these." Nollekens added the motion of his fingers to the movement of his head, pattered with his feet, and seemed pleased more than was his wont. She burst into a passion, exclaiming, "I will tell my sister—I will tell my sister." "Aye, do so," said her husband, "and she'll tell you what a great fool you were for marrying me, as she always does." "You filthy

thing," said this daughter of a justice, "your grovelling birth protects you from my anger." "Come, now I like that vastly," retorted the sculptor, "birth! why your father had a *plum*, but it was only a grocer's one; why I had five times the money he was worth when I made you my wife. Come, let us have no more of this—I wont stand it—I tell you that." Here a servant announced that the woman, who was dancing to Jack-in-the-Green, desired to see the artist. This renewed the bitter bickering. "There, sir," said the incensed spouse, "there is another of your madams. What, and you will go to her too! It's mighty well, sir—mighty well: when we were married you said you would dispense with such people; but you are always seeking new *beauties* —it's mighty well."

In these uncivil contests the husband, though he triumphed for a time, was obliged to yield at length—female perseverance gained the prize, and the sculptor was compelled to call upon his imagination for those divine shapes which the jealous temper of his imperious spouse drove from his door. This to such a man as Nollekens was an embarrassing matter—he had little of the inventive faculty—he could copy, but not create—visions such as teemed in the fancies of Flaxman and Fuseli were never present to his mental eye. Mrs. Nollekens would probably have had more patience, had she guessed that by banishing these pretty realities she was attacking her husband's purse.

Nollekens was not one of those prodigies who attain eminence at once—it came by painful labour and incessant diligence. His want of imagination

he sought to supply by studying the antique and correcting it from nature; and every fresh statue surpassed its predecessor in delicacy of workmanship. He was but a timid adventurer in the regions of taste, and walked with the pretty and the neat—unconscious of those soarings in ideal beauty and loftiness which distinguished the ancient sculptors and in which Michael Angelo excelled. During the golden days, when there were children of Anak in the land of art, he would hardly have been counted a sculptor. Yet in external appearance all that is necessary to fame and fortune seemed to surround him—commissions for statues, monuments and busts abounded—the modeller, the hewer and the carver, were all busy in his studios, and the name of Nollekens was heard of in distant regions.

During a period of ten years, from 1776 to 1786, he exhibited sixteen busts, five statues, and four groups—some of which were not in marble. The statues were Juno, Diana, Adonis, Cupid and Mercury—the second of which was for the Marquis of Rockingham, and the last for Lord Yarborough. This heathen progeny differed in nothing from the common accredited forms. To restore the forgotten gods of Greece to their pedestals was a labour too mighty for Nollekens, nor indeed has it wholly succeeded with the higher hand of Canova. Cupid after Cupid, Venus after Venus, and Apollo after Apollo, make their appearance here duly during the exhibiting season, and are as much forgotten commonly next year as last summer's butterflies.

Though Nollekens was sometimes vanquished

by the importunities of his wife, he showed sufficient obstinacy when his brethren attempted either to lead or drive him. In the controversy which arose concerning Hone the painter,* he joined the more respectable portion of the academy against that turbulent satirist, and no flattery could soothe him into silence. Hone, who envied and hated Reynolds, resolved to crush or expose him, and accordingly painted an old man in a gown, with a conjurer's rod in his hand, commanding portraits to rise out of the ground. These portraits represented the postures which he alleged Sir Joshua had stolen from the works of Velasquez, Vandyke, Titian, and Rembrandt—nor was this all—a scandalous turn was given in one portion of the picture to some real or imaginary flirtation between Angelica Kauffman and the President. This satiric picture Hone called "the Conjurer," and sent it to the Exhibition. The Academy conceiving this to be a malicious satire upon their chief man, resented it accordingly, and turned the picture out. As the reputation of a lady, an honorary member, had suffered also, there arose a serious war of words and letters. Hone explained and apologized, and brushed objectionable parts away—all was in vain—he then sought to soothe some of his brethren into peace—and among others tried Nollekens.

"One day (says Smith) Daphne, the dog, announced the approach of a stranger in the yard, and a tall, upright, large man, with a broad-brimmed

* Hone's miniatures were much admired. He died in July, 1784.

hat, and a lapelled coat buttoned up to his stock, with measured and stately steps, entered the studio, walked up to Mr. Nollekens, who was then modelling a bust of Sir Charles Eyre Coote, and full of self importance saluted him with 'Joseph Nollekens, Esquire, R. A. how do you do?' Nollekens, who never liked him, answered, 'Well, now I suppose you're come to get me to join you in the Academy to-night against Sir Joshua, but you're very much mistaken, and I can tell you more, I never will join you in anything you propose. You're always running your rigs against Sir Joshua; and you may say what you please, but I have never had any opinion of you since you painted the picture of the Conjurer as you called it; I don't wonder they turned it out of the Academy. And pray what business had you to bring Angelica into it? You know it was your intention to ridicule her, whatever you and your printed paper and your affidavits may say; however, you may depend upon it she won't forget it, if Sir Joshua does.' The visitor, who proved to be no other than Nathaniel Hone the painter, replied, 'Why, now how can you be so ill-tempered this morning? I have brought you two prints, which I bought in a lot at Old Gerard's.' 'Well, I don't care,' replied Nollekens, 'you don't bribe me in that way; I know what you are going to do to-night, and I'll vote against you—so you may take your prints back again.' 'Why,' said Hone, 'one of the prints is by Captain Baillie, a commissioner of the Stamp Office.' 'Ay, he's another swaggering fellow too,' answered the resolute sculptor, 'he was praising your mezzotinto print of Grose and

Forrest from another picture that did you no good—you are a man of no religion, else you would not sport with the Catholics in that way.' Here the dialogue ended, by Hone's wishing Joseph Nollekens, Esquire, R. A. a very good morning."

With all this firmness—or obstinacy—Nollekens was a placid man, and free from pride either professional or personal. He was one of the three little men of the Royal Academy; there were little Nollekens, little Fuseli, and little Flaxman, two of whom were in mental stature equal at least to any artists this country ever possessed; and the other—I mean Nollekens—was deficient neither in skill nor talent. For the sarcastic wit of Fuseli, and the grave dignity of Flaxman, the most turbulent of the students entertained respect; but not so with the good-humoured Joseph. While he was standing with his back to the fire, and his hands behind his back, relating endless stories about Rome and the tricks of the antiquarians, his merciless auditors were busy caricaturing him in sculpture, painting, and verse. All this was seen and unresented by the mild sculptor.

Nollekens was employed to commemorate the three commanders who fell in Rodney's great battle of April, 12th, 1782. As this was one of the government monuments, the choice of the sculptor rested with the Royal Academy. Of the merits of the rival sketches I know nothing—the approved design of Nollekens is sufficiently tame and common. The monument is of great size, and looks extremely magnificent—there is no want of marble and fine workmanship, but there is an absence of nature and of sentiment which is but ill compen-

sated by flowing draperies and flexible flesh. Upon the rostral column Genius has hung the medallions of Manners, Bayne, and Blair, the three captains; Neptune sits on a sea-horse and points to their portraits—Britannia, accompanied by her eternal Lion, stands looking the same way, while Fame flies ready with her laurel to crown the heroes. There is nothing in this but the common materials of ten thousand monuments—such designs may be made by receipt. All, however, is done that art, in the absence of genius, can do; Britannia is very sorrowful for her sons—her lion looks particularly savage—Neptune is like all other Neptunes, and carries a weighty trident—and Fame has the buoyant body and gossamer drapery necessary for ladies whose road lies through the air.

Whilst Nollekens was examining the site for this sumptuous monument, Smith accompanied him. The sculptor was fortunate in a pupil who modelled and stood for models of gods as well as men—ran errands—soothed difficult customers—made ribbon garlands for the neck of his mistress's dog—attended his master on all excursions of pleasure or of art; and, finally, when the grave had closed over him and his will was read, lifted the pen and filled more than a volume with anecdotes of him and his wife, his boy Tom, his maid Bronze, and his dogs Favourite and Daphne. With this pupil by his side, and his thoughts on the future monument, the sculptor addressed himself to all who approached him.—Catling, a verger, came, and the following curious conversation ensued.—"*Nollekens.* Why, Catling, you seem to be as fond of the Abbey as I am of my models by

Michael Angelo. Pray why do you suffer the schoolboys to chalk the stones so? I have been spelling pudding, grease, lard, butter, kitchen-stuff, and I don't know what else.—*Catling*. Why, thereby hangs a tale. You must know that the dean married a woman—here one of the clergymen appeared, and the conversation took a different turn.—*Nollekens*. My wife bid me ask you where the Cottonian Manuscripts are kept.—*Catling*. In Ashburnham House, Little Dean's Yard; it has a stone entrance, designed by Inigo Jones, and Dr. Bell lives there, who was chaplain to the Princess Amelia.—*Nollekens*. Ah, I know he was robbed by Sixteen String Jack, in Gunnersbury Lane. Well, my wife wants also to know what you have done with the wooden figures in wax masks, all in tattered silk, which the Westminster boys called the ragged regiment—she says they were borne before the corpse formerly.—*Catling*. They are put up in those very narrow closets, between our wax figures of Queen Elizabeth and Lord Chatham, in Islip's Chapel, where you have seen the stained glass of a boy slipping down a tree and the eye slipping out of its socket.—*Nollekens*. What, where the poll parrot is? I wonder you keep such stuff. I don't mind going to Mrs. Salmon's wax-work, where Mother Shipton kicks you as you go out. You should not have such rubbish in the Abbey—and then to take money for this foolish thing and the other foolish thing, so that no one can look at the works of art without being bothered about Queen Catherine's bones, the Spanish Ambassador's coffin, the lady who died by pricking her finger, and then the begging

cap called General Monk's, that people must put money into. You had better bid the dean see that his monuments don't want dusting—and look after the Westminster boys and not let them break the ornaments off to play at sconce with in the cloisters. Now at Rome, and all other churches abroad, an artist may go in and draw; but here he must apply and wait, and then be brought up like a criminal before the dean. Stothard, the Academician, had much trouble with the man, and was talked to about the proper fees. Bless my heart, it is all very bad."

During this conversation Gayfere, the Abbey mason, a worthy and clever man, came up and said, "Ah, Mr. Nollekens, and you are here?"—*Nollekens.* Here, yes. Why do you suffer that Queen Anne's altar to remain here in a Gothic building? Send it back to Whitehall whence it came. And why don't you hinder the Westminster boys from breaking off noses and fingers from the statues.—*Gayfere.* What an ungrateful little man you are—don't it give you a job now and then? Did not Mr. Dolben have a new nose put upon Camden's face the other day, at his own expense? —*Nollekens.* What have you done with the old Gothic pulpit?—*Catling.* It has been conveyed to our vestry, the Chapel of Saint Blaize, a curious part of the Abbey, and very dark. There is an ancient picture on the east wall of a figure, which can be made tolerably out. Did you ever notice the remaining colours of the curious little figure painted on the tomb of Chaucer?—*Nollekens.* No, that's not at all in my way. Here a Mr. Champneys joined them, and said, "Mr. Nollekens, can

you tell me the name of the sculptor who executed the bas-relief of Townshend's monument? The composition and style of carving are admirable; but I am sorry to see that some base person has stolen one of the heads."—*Nollekens.* That's what I was talking about; Dean Horsley should look after the monuments himself—hang his wax-works. Yes, I can tell you who did it—Tom Carter had the job, and one Eckstiene modelled the tablet part—it is very clever. I don't know what else he has done besides. Bartholomew Cheney modelled and carved the figures of Fame and Britannia for Captain Cornwall's monument—Sir Robert Taylor paid him four pounds fifteen shillings a week."

The character and taste of Nollekens appear to no disadvantage in dialogues such as these. He overflowed with all manner of local knowledge, and was intimate with all the varieties of art. He felt what remained till lately without remedy, the wanton and irreparable destruction carried on by strangers and strollers amongst the fairest monuments of the nation; and he also felt, what has not been remedied yet, the distressing tax which honourable curiosity or laudable taste must pay for leave to look at the monuments of those worthies who thought or warred for the welfare of Britain. If these magnificent monuments were intended to inspire the youth of the land with a noble emulation, they have been raised by the nation in vain. Few of our children can afford to visit them in their expensive sanctuary—to most of those who rise to great eminence half a dozen visits to the monuments of Westminster would,

in their boyhood, be attended with more expense than they could well bear. The monuments are now purified and protected, but the immense amount of fees and the tax at the doors have driven sculpture into St. Paul's—a cheaper but not a nobler sanctuary.

In his character of repairer and restorer of ancient delapidated statues, Nollekens became acquainted with Townley, who formed the collection which bears his name, and was employed to add a pair of arms to a small statue of Venus. It is amusing to be told that the artist and antiquarian held a consultation upon the sentiment and action into which the goddess should be restored—that Townley wished various positions to be tried, such as raising a dove to her lips—or entwining a wreath —or holding a serpent in her hand, and looking into its eye. "Strange to tell," says Smith, "I stood to Mr. Nollekens for all the various positions he could devise for the arms, and after six changes the present ones were carved, the right one of which is too much like one of the arms of the Venus de Medici, which are looked upon as the work of Baccio Bandinelli." The admonitions of the sculptor's spouse had been so far effectual that, for the arms of a Venus, he contented himself with one of his own sex for a model. Those who desire to see in what spirit Nollekens executed this task will be gratified by going to the British Museum. Gavin Hamilton has shared in whatever honour belongs to this renovation, but he has got more than he merited, for he was in Rome at the time. The Townleyian Venus is repaired in a better taste than the *antique* marbles at Oxford,

which were put into the hands of a presumptuous artist, who laid his chisel without remorse upon the surface as well as the fractures, and made all smooth and *modern*.

He was at a sale of drawings, when Betew, a silversmith and picture dealer, accosted him with, "Well, Mr. Nollekens, time has made little difference in your looks—you walk just in the same way, with your cane and ruffles, as you did twenty years ago, when I sold you Roubiliac's model, which he designed for General Wolfe's monument." "I remember it well," said the sculptor; "you would have the odd sixpence of me. What do you want for that model of a boy which you have?" "Why now," said the dealer, "cannot you say Flamingo's Boy—you know it to be one of his, and you also know that no man ever modelled boys better than he did; it is said, he was employed to model children for Rubens, to put into his pictures." "Do you still buy old silver," inquired Nollekens, "I have some odd silver buttons, and Mrs. Nollekens wants to dispose of a chased watch-case—one made by old Moser for the Bow manufactory." "Aye, I know," responded Betew, "there were many clever things made there. There were some clever men who wrought for the Bow concern—they produced many spirited figures—such as Quin in Falstaff, Garrick in Richard, the Duke of Cumberland striding triumphantly over the Pretender, who is begging quarter, John Wilkes and others. Chelsea was another place for china; the factory stood just below the bridge." "My father worked for them at one time," said Nollekens. "Yes," replied Betew,

"and Sir James Thornhill designed for them. Mr. Walpole has at Strawberry Hill half-a-dozen china plates by Sir James, which he bought at Mrs. Hogarth's sale. The cunning rogues produced very white and delicate ware, but then they had their clay from China, which, when the Chinese found out, they would not let the captains have any more for ballast, and the consequence was that the whole concern failed."

The love of the nation for bust sculpture was, as the craniologists say, strongly developed in the days of Nollekens. Scores at a time of marble heads were making progress under his chisel, or those of his assistants; and though, between the year 1786 and 1800, he sent some dozen only to the Exhibition, it is well known that he executed thrice as many more—his prices increasing, with his increasing fame, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty guineas. His gains upon these were considerable. The model was the work of his own hands, and might cost him six or eight sittings before he gave it to his moulder to cast into plaster of Paris—a mason rough-hewed it—a sculptor carved it as far as the model enabled him to go—a mason then resumed his labours, and placed it on the pedestal, when the master-hand went over the whole again, re-touching it from the living head. To the wages of all these various hands were to be added the value of the marble and the wages of the sawyer—amounting altogether to a considerable sum, varying, according to the difficulties of the portraiture and the hardness of the marble, from thirty to fifty pounds. This must be considered as expensive work com-

pared to portrait painting. He paid twenty-five pounds for the carving of each bust, and fitting it on the pedestal—a fair price, which places his character above the reproach of being meanly parsimonious in the matter of wages.

He was an indulgent master—lived on the most familiar terms with his assistants, jested and sung with them, quaffed porter, and entered into many of those amusing absurdities common to all studios where a dozen men or more are met together. He hummed snatches of mendicant ballads even while modelling the heads of titled sitters, and loved to mimic the cries of the travelling vendors of fruit or fish as they strolled past his door. "I remember," says Smith, "the cries of two men pleasing him so extravagantly that he has continued to hum their notes for days together, even when he has been engaged with his sitters, measuring the stone in the yard for a bust or a figure, feeding the dog, putting up the bar of the gate, or improving the attitudes of his Venuses." On busts he wrought with pleasure, but on his Venuses with enthusiasm—if enthusiasm may be imputed to one so unimpassioned and cold. He imagined that he was creating, in the revival of those goddesses, figures of such surpassing grace and beauty as would place their fashioner beside the illustrious sculptors of antiquity, and he sought by long study, careful workmanship, and frequent retouchings, to give to the world something which should embalm his name, and make it be pronounced with honour. On one of those statues he wrought for twenty years—to speak correctly, it stood beside him in his studio, and when leisure served, or the fit was

on him, he recommenced his labours;—and as he consumed much time, so in proportion he prized the figure.

Those Venuses gave more pleasure to the sculptor than the means which he took to render them perfect gave delight to his wife. The anecdotes which such labours gave rise to are spread over the surface of many years. "During a summer's evening," says Smith, "he was standing, as was his custom, with his arms behind him at the yard gate, which opened into Tichfield Street, when a lady, most elegantly dressed, attended by a strapping footman in silver-laced livery, with a tall gilt-headed cane, nodded to the sculptor, and smilingly asked him if he did not know her. "Indeed I don't, madam," he replied. "What!" she exclaimed, "do you forget Miss Coleman, who brought a letter from Charles Townley to show legs with your Venus? Why I have been with you twenty times in the little studio standing for her." "Oh, lack-a-daisy," said Nollekens, "so you have! Why what a fine woman you're grown —come in, and I'll show you your figure—I have done it in marble." All this was however observed by Mrs. Nollekens, who, informed by the vigilant —Smith adds—suspicious Bronze, that the sculptor was holding parley with a fine lady at the gate, went to the window, pretending to feed a bull-finch. Miss Coleman went near, and addressed her with much politeness, but observing her cold looks and haughty air, said, "O, I see, madam, you don't know me; you have given me many a bason of warm broth when in the depth of winter I stood for the Venus." Mrs. Nollekens dashed down the

sash, shaking her head at Joseph, and muttering, "Oh fie, sir; oh fie!" When the sculptor faced his indignant spouse in the parlour he met with an ungracious reception—she upbraided him with knowing such creatures after he had done with them in his studio. What answer he returned is not known: he saw that he was purchasing fame at the risk of domestic peace, that his wife, unencumbered with the pleasant cares of either sons or daughters, had leisure on her hands to annoy and molest him, and that she was resolved to lessen the expenses of the studio, and reign supreme there as in all matters of domestic rule. It was, nevertheless, generally believed that the figure of Mrs. Nollekens influenced the sculptor's notions of beauty, and a lordly visitor one day, on seeing the lady, said, "Ah, Nollekens, I see now where you find the forms of your Venuses." Many other artists are believed to have profited by the charms of their wives.

I have spoken of the free manners of the sculptor and the suspicions of his spouse. During his residence in Rome, stories of no creditable sort were coupled freely with the name of Nollekens. Such surmises were countenanced in after-days by the casual irritations of his wife, and by the report of Barry, who was said to have been a sharer in his excesses in Italy. But such stories are not a little at variance with the sober and unimpassioned tenor of the artist's whole life. Joseph, in all that relates to the headlong passions of human nature, was, I am inclined to think, worthy of his name. Mrs. Nollekens had her fears; but then the fears of a wife—with all reverence be it spoken—are often

vague and visionary; and as for the insinuations of Barry, most probably they were ironical—much which we know of that singular man supports this interpretation.

Nollekens had the merit of being a sincere man—whom he loved he praised—whom he disliked he abused; and as he did with men so did he with works of art. He expressed no pleasure in looking at the Madness and Melancholy of Cibber—statues which threw Roubiliac into raptures;—yet whenever he saw a work which he liked, he cried out, "Mighty fine—mighty fine—he's a clever fellow who has done this, and I must go and tell him so." For those whom he disliked he had no courteous mode of escaping collision—it was thus he handled Wolcot. The poet—a robust upright personage—accosted the puny sculptor one evening as he stood at the door of his studio with "Why, Nollekens, you never speak to me now—what is the reason?" "The reason," said the artist, "is, that you have published such lies of the King, and have had the impudence to send them to me; but Mrs. Nollekens burnt them. I desire you'll send no more—the Royal Family are very good to me, and are great friends to all artists, and I don't like to hear any one say anything against them." Wolcot smiled, laid his cane on the sculptor's shoulders, and exclaimed, "Well said, *little Nolly*—I like the man who sticks to his friend; you shall make a bust of me for that." "I'll see you damned first," replied Nollekens fiercely; "and I'll tell you besides, no man in the Academy but Opie would have painted your picture—you richly deserved the broken head you

got from Gifford—so now you know my mind." He left the doctor standing at the door, shut it, bolted it, and so ended the colloquy.

From what I have related of the conversations of Nollekens, it will be readily imagined that he was no picker of fine words or framer of pretty speeches. He was, in truth, a blunt sincere man, and as such was an unwelcome companion to those who were afraid their gentility might catch a stain from conversing with one who never said what he did not think, and whose sentiments were clothed in the common language of the working classes. At the splendid Sunday dinners of Townley, the blunt and uncourtly Nollekens was a good set-off to the accomplished Reynolds and the agreeable Zoffany. The sculptor, if we may credit report, loved the good cheer more than the enlightened conversation; he was not, however, so wholly absorbed in his own reflections as to omit observing that a certain learned Abbe Devay surpassed all competition in the labours of the table. "He is a little man," said the sculptor, "a great deal less than myself, but he beats me out-and-out. He is one of the greatest gormandizers I ever met with; though to look at him you would declare him to be in the most deplorable state of starvation." The house of Townley had many attractions for such men as Nollekens—it was filled with treasures of ancient and modern art—statues, bas-reliefs, vases, and urns collected in all quarters of Europe. Among the statues were the Isis, the Diana, the Discobolus, the drunken Faun, an Adonis, and that tall lady, six feet four inches high, distinguished in the profession by the name

of the "Long-sided Venus," while among the busts stood Homer, Hadrian, Hercules, Trajan, Adonis, Antoninus, and that exquisite one, the Isis rising from the lotus. All these wonders in art are now arranged in the British Museum.

If the conversations of Nollekens when he dined with the great and the eminent were common-place and unprofitable, the same cannot be said of his unpremeditated gossip when he was at ease amongst his assistants. He then whistled and talked, hummed favourite tunes, sung snatches of old songs, and gossipped away about sculpture and sculptors —scattering light and information upon the neglected and the deserving. When the death of Deare, the sculptor, was communicated to Nollekens, he answered—"He is dead, is he? That palavering fellow, Fagan, promised me some of his drawings, but I never had any. I have got two of his four bas-reliefs of the Seasons, and the two oval bas-reliefs of Cupid and Psyche: they are very clever, I assure you: but he was a very upstart fellow, or he ought to have made money by sending over some antiques from Rome. I told him I would sell them for him; but the sculptors now-a-days never think of bringing home any thing—they are all so stupid and so conceited of their own abilities. Why, do you know, I got the first money I ever won by putting antiques together. Hamilton and I and Jenkins generally used to go shares in what we bought: and as I had to match the pieces and clean them, I had the best part of the profits. Gavin Hamilton was a good fellow; but as for Jenkins, he followed the trade of supplying the foreign visitors with intaglios and cameos made by his own people

whom he kept in the ruins of the Coliseum, fitted up for them to work in slyly by themselves. He sold cameos as fast as he made them." Few artists venture to lift up the curtain so boldly; nor are artists alone concerned in some of these tricks. I have heard, that on one occasion, when an envoy who had just returned from Italy was pressing his late majesty to buy a picture that "would do honour to the royal collection"—the king whispered to a friend at his elbow, "I know not how it happens, but I never sent a gentleman in a public capacity to Italy, but he came back a picture-dealer."

The art which Nollekens learned in Rome, of uniting several pieces of marble into one work, he practised with much success in England. It was once—with some it may still be—the practice, to carve the heads and hands, frequently the feet, of monumental statues and groups in separate pieces of marble, and then unite them with fine cement and fastenings of copper. In this manner many of our monuments are made; some of them are in more pieces than there are words in their inscriptions. The difficulty of finding large blocks of pure marble occasioned much of this, for the practice is not profitable; the multitude of neat joints, and trouble in working little pieces, consume both time and money. If it is not profitable to the sculptor, it is still more unprofitable to the country. When time or accident have separated monuments from the wall to which they are attached, what will become of those which, instead of being carved from a single block and thus forming a lasting and intelligible work, are composed of

twenty or thirty bits? They will look what they were like before, as much as the stones and rubbish which formed a palace resemble the original building. That Nollekens frequently made up his monuments from many small pieces there is sufficient proof. Those who love sculpture should not be alarmed for spots or streaks in the stone—it is of far more importance to have a lasting work of art carved from one solid block, than to have a purer figure composed of half-a-dozen pieces, which will come asunder when time and exposure have rotted the cement and weakened the interior fastenings.

Nollekens was a collector of curious things connected with art, and during his residence abroad as well as in England expended considerable sums upon coins of all kinds and in all sorts of metal. His habits of economy were well known, and this antiquarian collection of his was talked of as an invaluable hoard of old gold. The rumour reached the ears of certain expert depredators, who invaded the sculptor's premises at the dead hour of the night, penetrated to the room where his treasure lay, and carried off all the coins of silver and gold, leaving only those of the baser metals. It is a curious circumstance that the thieves unintentionally remunerated the artist for this depredation—they left in the haste of their retreat an old pocket-book containing bank notes to no inconsiderable amount. "The rascals," said Nollekens, "took away my silver and gold, and left me their paper." They missed his valuable collection of gems from the antique—or probably they prized only what was in precious metal. Of this collection it is said that

they were strangely mixed—the coarse with the beautiful, and the fine original with the gross imitation—he laid Helen beside Lucretia, Susanna with Leda, and Hannibal by Flora. Nor was he more scrupulous in the arrangement of models and casts in his shops and studios—the walls were hung with antique heads and hands, legs and feet, lions' heads, and bits of drapery—they were for the working day only. To these were added many casts from fine living nature. The feet of our ladies, from their practice of wearing pointed shoes, are inferior to the female feet of some other nations; but perhaps no hands on earth are equal to theirs in beauty, and their necks and shoulders are in general exquisitely graceful. Of such casts Nollekens had a large supply. He frequently rebuked his pupils when he found them studying from the antique, saying, "Trust nature—trust nature—and where will you find such nature as in England?"

Britain had now attained to eminence in art, and sculptors of first-rate genius appeared to direct the national taste. Flaxman, Banks, and Bacon, had arisen in succession—and others of high merit were making themselves known—yet the public favour towards the works of Nollekens continued to flow and increase—the more so that no one had yet successfully contested with him his long supremacy in busts. Though between sixty and seventy years old, he continued to work with the same diligence and the same skill as in the days of his youth—his simplicity of manners, his perfect sincerity of speech, his liveliness and his good-nature had undergone no eclipse. He was silently ga-

thering a splendid fortune, which he knew not how to enjoy; he seemed conscious alone of the fame which he acquired, for when his works were spoken of in terms of commendation, his eye sparkled, his brow coloured, and he was agitated with pleasure. The narrow disposition of his wife, and the jealous colour of her mind, gave him little uneasiness; and though their domestic bickerings were frequent and sharp, the storm of invective flew harmlessly over him, and neither shook his nerves nor hurt his steady skill of hand. His wife's sister, a lady of learning and acuteness, increased his domestic discomfort by persisting in instructing him in the art of spelling—an accomplishment which he rated very low, and resented the possession of in his relative. It was in vain that she represented how much good spelling and good grammar would adorn those notes which his profession required him to write; and that his meaning might be frequently mistaken if he persisted in spelling words according to their sound. To have a wife who reigned paramount in all matters of a domestic nature, and even extended her sway into the regions of sculpture, was surely misery sufficient, without the addition of such an auxiliary as a satiric sister, who could write all his offences against grammar and spelling in a book, and calmly read them aloud for his instruction and amusement. The upshot of all this was—Miss Welch retired to Bath, and Nollekens, victorious alike over woman's spirit and the proprieties of language, enjoyed his triumph.

The ten years which followed 1800 were the busiest of all the days of Nollekens. The love of

busts seemed to grow in the land;—he executed upwards of fifty, and well nigh a score of groups and statues. Amongst the former were the far-famed heads of Pitt and Fox, and amongst the latter the monument of Mrs. Howard of Corby Castle, the statue of Pitt for Cambridge, and the Venus anointing her hair. Of the busts of the rival statesmen he executed hundreds — crowds upon crowds pressed round them at the Exhibition—verse and prose to an unmeasured amount were lavished upon them, and the sculptor's assistants had to toil night and day to supply the public demand.* The portrait of Pitt was made from a mask taken after death, aided by paintings; that of Fox was modelled from the life; and as the talent of the sculptor lay chiefly in copying what he saw, the latter had a manifest advantage. It is perhaps no discredit to Nollekens that he succeeded well with neither—their faces were unfavourable for representation in marble—one was long and lean, the other fat and round; the head of Pitt, to put its general character in keeping with the noble brow, required more additions than the artist had the boldness to hazard—and the air of anxiety should have been softened; on the other hand, the head of Fox needed to be pared of cer-

* "On Mr. Nollekens' return from Putney Common," says his biographer, "after taking Pitt's mask, he observed to his assistant Gahagan, pointing to it on the opposite seat of the coach, 'There—I would not take fifty guineas for that mask, I can tell ye.' He would have done wrong if he had, for from this mask and Hoppner's picture, which was lent him by Lord Mulgrave, he was enabled to produce the statue erected in the Senate House of Cambridge, for which he received three thousand guineas."

tain marks of indulgence in the cheeks and chin, and augmented a little in the forehead, to render it worthy of art. This demanded no timid artist; one, in short, who knew that the secret of fine portraiture lies in tampering with the deformities of nature. But Nollekens made no such attempt; he stood more in awe than was proper of the express images of the living men—in his hands Pitt inclines to the mean, and Fox to the vulgar.

Of the other busts of this period it is enough to say that they support the character of the sculptor. Those most remarkable are the heads of the Prince of Wales, Dr. Burney, the Marquis of Stafford, and the Duke of Bedford. They have all an air of nature and simplicity; that of the Prince of Wales, now his Majesty, has a look of serene elegance with a fine carriage of the head; and the Marquis of Stafford shows gentleness of mind and much tastefulness about the mouth. It seems that the increasing fame of the sculptor, or a change of fashion or feeling, rendered concealment of the high names of his sitters no longer necessary. Up to the year 1800, the busts of Nollekens were distinguished in the Academy catalogue as those of "noblemen, gentlemen," and "ladies of quality;" and this reserve could not originate with the sculptor, to whose success it must have been injurious. Whatever was the cause, the fact is certain that the first of his busts publicly named in the exhibition were those of Lady Hawkesbury, John Townley, the Duke of Bedford, and Lord Petre, all of which made their appearance in 1801. It had been long the practice of the Academy to publish a key to the public catalogue of the exhibition. This was

no longer necessary; and from 1801, the annual lists sold at the door settle names and dates, with a precision which to the future historian of British art will be invaluable.

Anecdotes of Nollekens during the sittings of personages of high degree, might be multiplied to any extent, for they are on many men's memories. While he was at Rome he wore his hair tied up in a club, on coming to England he made use of hair powder, and when age had thinned his locks he mounted a wig; but during those eventful days when his present Majesty sat for his bust, the sculptor put on his best attire, and with his hair gathered over a high toupet, proceeded with his model. Now the cape of his coat was so high and his neck so short that his head kept ducking within the standing collar, leaving nothing above it at times but the powdered toupet. The illustrious sitter kept his looks composed for some time:

"But to be grave excelled all power of face."

The artist noticed his half suppressed smiles, and, probably not suspecting the cause, grew peevish and irritated:—he thrust his thumbs into the corners of the mouth, and giving his head an angry wag, exclaimed, "If you laugh I'll make a fool of you." As three-fourths of the expression for good or evil lies in the mouth of a bust, the sculptor touched, as he well knew, the proper place to make a sitter ridiculous. As he was modelling the bust of a lady of rank, he desired her to lower her handkerchief in front. "I am sure, Sir," she said, "you must be so well acquainted with the general form

as to render such examination unnecessary." "True, true," he was heard to mutter, "it matters little—there's no woman's bosom worth looking at after eighteen." "You must sometimes be annoyed," said a lady to Mr. Nollekens, "by the ridiculous remarks of your sitters." "No, madam, no," answered the sculptor, "I never allow any body to fret me—I listen to all and work away—telling them, when they urge me for some alteration which would deform the head, 'If you don't like it when it is done, why don't take it.'" Many sitters, nevertheless, dictate their own positions,—they generally try to assume the amiable in expression and the genteel in posture, and present themselves to the artist constrained and affected. In the details of the face the sitter is at the mercy of the sculptor, and let the former be ever so fastidious and querulous about his looks, the latter, if he is a man of discretion as well as skill, will have it all his own way. This is not to be achieved, however, by either argument or persuasion—it is to be done by seeming to yield to the wish of the sitter—by touching and not altering—by ruffling the surface of the work without either lessening or augmenting: an old practice, and one that in wise hands cannot be well counteracted.

Of the twenty statues and groups, I must now give some account. The statue of Pitt attracted much attention at the time. It is a little too theatrical in character—the action passes the bounds of self-possession and clear-headed thought. He is looking with all his might—but that kind of stare is not mental power any more than muscular vigour is—the general simplicity of the artist's

style fails to redeem him here from a charge of extravagance. By the judicious use of the University gown the more incurable parts of modern dress are concealed, and the artist has earned the rare praise of having used actual costume like a man of taste. For this statue seven thousand pounds were subscribed—of which three thousand guineas were paid for the figure, and one thousand for the pedestal.*

The monumental group of Mrs. Howard of Corby Castle, a lovely woman perishing in childbed, with Religion by her side, holding up her finger to heaven, is a work of great beauty both in design

* "The marble for the figure," says Smith, "did not ultimately cost him more than twenty pounds; for he had so cunningly economized the block that he cut out from the corners several pieces for various busts, and even farther than this—the block not being long enough by the depth of Mr. Pitt's head, he contrived to drill out a lump from between the legs large enough for the head, which he put upon the shoulders of the block. The arm also was carved from a single piece; and yet for this figure, pieced in a manner, which the sculptors of Italy would have been ashamed of, he received the unheard of price of three thousand guineas, and one thousand for the pedestal, giving Gahagan, who carved it, only the odd three hundred pounds for his trouble." It may aid in blunting the severity of these uncandid insinuations to say that no wise sculptor will willingly waste good marble; whatever the block affords more than the statue requires is cut carefully off. In this way Canova cut one of his Hebes from beneath the right hand of his celebrated colossal statue of Napoleon, now in the appropriate keeping of the Duke of Wellington; and many other instances might be given of a similar sort of saving with artists, whose characters as gentlemen are beyond impeachment. Nor is the charge of parsimony in the payment of Gahagan any better founded; in truth, three hundred pounds was an extravagant price for the carving of such a statue.

and execution. Such a touching work in a church has more than the effect of a sermon. The cold serene loveliness of the mother—the natural beauty of the hapless child, and the allegorical monitress pointing to the abodes of the blessed, appeal to every heart, and touch the meanest understanding. It has been surpassed in moral grandeur of conception by the poetic genius of Flaxman, and in the elegance of nature by Chantry; but it still holds its place in public affection, and will continue to do so while human feelings are what they should be. The price was two thousand pounds.

Of the Venus anointing herself, the favourite work of Nollekens, a colder tale must be told. The piece is deficient in the great charm of original thought and natural propriety of action. An elegant body and handsome limbs will not do alone —they must have the help of higher qualities. The Queen of love is dropping incense on her tresses from a bottle, and looking aside. Had the artist made her comb her locks like the ladies in the old ballads, she might have done with her glances what she pleased; but in pouring out liquid incense the eye must aid the hand. Every body perceives that the action requires the assistance of the eye, and that the mistake mars the beauty of the whole statue. So much was this felt at the sale of the sculptor's works, which took place after his death, that some few hundreds only were offered for the figure, which the artist himself had valued at £1,500, and it was bought in by a friend. The workmanship of the statue is very fine.

If in his goddesses Nollekens conceived he was

showing his taste in the antique, and reviving the lost works of the old sculptors in their original spirit, an opportunity of another sort was now presented—that of expressing in words his feeling for the undoubted excellence of the sculpture of Greece. He was desired by the House of Commons to give his opinion of the merits of that collection known by the name of the Elgin Marbles. At much expense and risk, and not without the exercise of some skill in negotiation, the figures which ornamented the temple of Minerva at Athens were removed to England, and arranged for public inspection. When the doors were opened, painters, sculptors and architects, with West, the President of the Academy, at their head, went to look and to study. They were struck with the vigour of the conceptions and the breadth and simplicity of style, and asserted that from that day forward a freer and fresher spirit would be infused into British art. The public heard with rapture of this influx of statues, groups, and processions of gods and goddesses, and hastened to gaze and wonder at those prodigies of genius. But to all save the artists the disappointment was woeful. Time, accident, and barbarians, both christian and heathen, had united to deface and injure them—few hands or feet or heads remained—here and there some exquisite hand-breadth of that beauty which charmed in the days of Phidias was indeed visible; but in general the external grace of the workmanship was gone—the action was dubious, and the sentiment had to be imagined. All this was a serious drawback on the admiration which these marbles merit; but artists brought eyes quickened by the

hope of solid information, and when summoned by the government to speak to their excellence and estimate their value, they gave their verdict in no measured terms.

The sense which Nollekens had of the beauty of the Elgin Marbles may have been great; but the way in which he expressed it is abundantly vague. "I am well acquainted with these marbles," said he, "they are as fine as any that I saw in Italy, and the finest things that ever came to this country. I hold the Theseus and the Neptune to be two of the finest; I can compare them to nothing but the Apollo Belvidere and the Laocoon, and I think they are as fine. I cannot say they have more ideal beauty than the Apollo, but I think they have as much. They are not a fair copy of nature, but I look upon them as ideal beauty and closeness of study from nature. The bas-reliefs are also very fine, in the first class of that kind of work, and so are the Centaurs. I reckon the whole much above the Townley Marbles in beauty. The Townley marbles are indeed quite finished and mended up, and these are real fragments as they have been found, and it would take a great deal of time and expense to put them in order. They will be more useful to artists in their present state than if restored, and I would not have them touched." Of their value in money he could not speak.

Such was the opinion of Nollekens on the comparative merits of the Theseus and the Apollo of Belvidere; he was supported by one of the ablest of his brethren, Mr. Westmacott, who, indeed, said the River God and the Theseus were infinitely superior to the Apollo; and contradicted by Flaxman,

who declared that for poetic beauty the Apollo surpassed all the statues he knew. The faith of our two sculptors must have been strong when they gave such hardy testimony; the Theseus and the Neptune are stript of all elegance of surface—their feet and hands are broken off—one head is gone, and all that remains of the other is but the rough rudiments of a human face. I am wholly at a loss to conceive on what principle statues thus mutilated and flayed, and of which no one can divine the sentiment, should be declared equal or superior to the perfect and unchanged Apollo. Look at the God of Day living and breathing before you, in the words of Byron—and the statue is still superior to the verse, exquisitely descriptive as the verse is:

"....The Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life and poesy, and light—
The Sun in human limbs arrayed, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot—the arrow bright
With an immortal vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
And majesty flash their full lightnings by
Developing in that one glance the Deity."

Turn from these rapturous words and the yet diviner image which inspired them, and look at those two maltreated marbles, fine indeed as far as they go, exquisite in the little that is spared of the original, and say how senseless they are beside that inspired shape of which Flaxman spoke so truly, when in poetic loveliness he gave it precedence to all created things.

Nollekens had now reached his seventy-third year, and the friends of his youth were falling

around him. His regularity, temperance, and unimpassioned nature were all in favour of long life, and his bodily strength continued undiminished. He modelled away with all the alacrity of early years—touched and retouched his Venus—held conferences with his wife on domestic economy, with his assistants on the quality and terms of his latest purchases of marble, and saw with pleasure his fame suffering no eclipse and his fortune expanding. His wife, more youthful than himself, and more abstemious and saving, began to fail. The Pekuah of Johnson wore in 1810 another look than that which charmed the great moralist some forty years before; an ailment of the spine confined her to a couch, and as infirm health seldom sweetens the temper, she became peevish and ill to please, and frequently upset the composure of her husband. Joseph, it is true, was no nice person, and without intending to hurt her feelings, he frequently discoursed upon the nature of her complaint with a simplicity and plainness which could not fail to ruffle the temper of one who was something of a pedant in her speech, and who loved to utter sentences as weighty in words, if not in meaning, as those of her early admirer Johnson. Ill health was a serious affliction to a lady who carried her plans of economy into the matter of matches and brooms; she could no longer make her choice and settle the price at a butcher's stall of a favourite joint—or cheapen cauliflowers, and scold some mendicant dealer in fruit for a rise in the price of apples. She could even attend no longer to the proper distribution of coals amongst the studio fires—caution imprudent sitters of the wrath of

her husband when they presumed to add fuel to the starving grate, nor superintend the motions of a cinder-saver, invented by a frugal dignitary of the church, and presented by its pious maker to the artist. All these things troubled her sorely, and the murmurs of her husband assisted nothing to alleviate her regrets.

As old age and its weaknesses came on, the sculptor and his sharp-sighted wife could not fail to perceive the increase of a certain description of friends so well described by Ben Jonson.

"..... I have no parent, child, ally,
To give my substance to; but whom I make
Must be my heir: and this makes men observe me:
This draws new clients daily to my house,
Women and men of every sex and age,
That bring me presents, send me plate, corn, jewels,
With hope that when I die—which they expect
Each greedy minute—it shall then return
Ten-fold upon them: whilst some covetous
Above the rest seeks to engross me whole,
And counter-work the one unto the other—
Contend in gifts as they would seem in love."

Of those sympathising persons who gathered around this old and childless pair, and sought by presents of little price, and a multitude of agreeable personal attentions, to gain confidence and love, and so find their way into that final will which was to disperse a now very large property—the most assiduous was a wine merchant and connossieur in pictures—Caleb Whiteford by name. This man—the discoverer of a species of printing-press wit, called Cross Readings, and the wearer of the last wig in London with five curls on each

side—kept pouring into the sculptor's house and studio such small presents as he imagined would please the old and infirm. To the wife he gave flowers in pots and nosegays, and to the husband fleecy-hosiery shirts and choice wine; and availing himself of his reputation for small wit, sought by ridicule and raillery to drive away from the threshold of Nollekens all those, and they were not a few, who had wishes like his own. But one day, while scheming Caleb was reckoning how long it was likely two sinking persons, near eighty years old, might last, and how much of two hundred thousand pounds would drop in to the share of so kind and faithful a friend, Death inconsiderately laid the fatal touch upon himself!

To a fair fame and a fine fortune, labour, at the eightieth year, could add but little, yet Nollekens still laboured—something was necessary to amuse a man who could not gladden himself with his own thoughts. He no longer ventured, indeed, to model statues or groups — but his sitters for busts were many, and amongst them men of mind and station. From 1810 to 1816, the last years of his exertions, he modelled some thirty busts—not a few of which rank with the most valuable of his works. The chief heads are those of the Duke of York, Lord Castlereagh, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Erskine, Lord Egremont, Lord Liverpool, Canning, Perceval, Benjamin West, and Thomas Coutts. The bust of the Duke of York is an admirable piece of workmanship—that of Canning is of high merit—the least worthy of praise, perhaps, is Perceval—with sunken cheeks and a death-like brow, such as he looked when he lay under the pistol of the assassin.

When Lord Castlereagh was sitting for his bust coals were high in price, the weather extremely cold, and Mrs. Nollekens, sitting bolstered up by the fire, seemed shivering. His lordship rose, when the sculptor went out for more clay, and good-naturedly threw some coals on the fire. "Oh, my good lord," croaked the dame, "I don't know what Mr. Nollekens will say!" "Tell him, my good lady," said he, smiling, "to put them into my bill!"

The bust of Mr. Coutts originated in the recommendation of Fuseli. The banker said to the keeper of the Academy, "My family have urged me to sit for my bust—now as you know price can be no object, pray tell me who you think can execute it best." "I can have no difficulty in doing that," replied Fuseli; "for though Nollekens is weak in many things, in a bust he stands unrivalled. Had you required a group of figures, I should have recommended Flaxman—but for a bust, give me Nollekens." This was, I believe, the last bust on which the sculptor laid his hand, and it certainly cannot be praised either as a likeness or a work of art. The aged banker was very ill at the time, and this is visibly impressed upon the head. It has an air of squalid poverty and rueful suffering. Mrs. Coutts, according to the record of Smith, accompanied her husband to these sittings, and brought with her the most delicious soups and comforting refreshments, which she warmed in a silver saucepan and served with her own hands. "I declare," said Mrs. Nollekens, who was a witness to the care of the lady, "it almost did me as much good to see old Mr. Coutts

enjoy every spoonful of it as it would have done had it passed through my own mouth." "These savoury soup scenes," continues Smith, "must have been comically curious as well as truly melancholy, for at that time Mrs. Nollekens was in her last stage of existence, with her spine nearly bent double. A wry neck had much twisted her head, which, in the best possible position, reclined upon a wing of a nurse's old-fashioned high-back night chair, covered with a broad chequered red and white stuff. Then Mr. Coutts was supping his soup, attended by his wife, a lively lady, most fashionably dressed, whilst Nollekens, nearly deaf, was prosecuting his bust, and at the same time repeating his loud interrogations as to the price of stocks, when his sitter good-naturedly staid the spoon half-way to his mouth to answer him." This scene, made up mainly of old age, illness, and avarice, does not strike me as at all diverting. On the 17th of August, 1817, Mrs. Nollekens was relieved from all her sufferings, in the seventy-fourth year of her age.

The change which the death of this jealous and penurious lady wrought on Nollekens was not unnoticed, it seems, by his household. He received the common condolences of friends—looked doleful—paced up and down his room, and glanced frequently at the empty chair in which his wife had rested for many years. He felt the want of her company, and for some time maintained the establishment of his household as she had left it. But old and sinking as he was, his heart, no longer curbed and rebuked in its likings by his sordid partner, began to expand—two moulded

candles appeared on his table in room of one—he paid more attention to his dress—drank more wine at table—sat up later at night—lay longer in the morning, and even invited friends to breakfast, dine and sup. He grew more liberal every way—would treat his assistants to a coach into the country and a dinner—was hospitable to those who had acted as his models—asked them sometimes if a bank-note would be useful, and sent them home rejoicing ten pounds richer than they came. All this showed a man not naturally sordid—nor had his decision entirely forsaken him. A servant maid, called Mary, presuming on her good looks and on the epithet of *pretty*, which the sculptor gave her in a moment of forgetfulness, ventured, it seems, to assume haughty airs, and even treat her master roughly. The old man kindled up, turned her unceremoniously away, and declared his determination to be ruler of his own house. His biographer alleges that Pretty Mary had a secret attachment to the artist's person or purse, and aspired to be his wife—if so, her way of wooing was as original as unsuccessful.

Pretty Mary, however, was not the only one who went unwisely to work with our sculptor: his foreign confessor—a person who, by profession, should have been abstemious—contrived to eat and drink himself entirely out of his good graces. This holy man called one wet morning, and having performed his office, was about to go, when he was advised by Nollekens to stay till the rain abated—he stopt till dinner was ready. Now the Duke of Newcastle had sent the sculptor a brace of fine pheasants—on one of which, nicely

roasted, they sat down to dine. The confessor helped his host to a wing, and himself to the remainder, though he declared he loathed such dainties. "I have no pudding, reverend Sir," said Nollekens, "will you have a glass of wine?—Bronze, bring a bottle of wine." The wine was produced—the sculptor took one glass—pushed the bottle to the priest—and laying his head back, as was his custom, fell sound asleep. On awaking, Nollekens said, "take another glass, Sir." "Thank you, Sare," said the priest, "but I have finish de bottle!"—"The Devil you have!" muttered the patient. "And now, Sare," continued his reverence, "as the rain is over, I will take my leave." As soon as he was gone, "Bronze," said Nollekens to his old attendant, "don't let that old rascal in again. Why, do you know, he ate up all that large bird—for he gave me but one wing—he swallowed all the ale too—and out of a whole bottle of wine, I had but one glass." From this time forward he dispensed with a confessor.

He was now become weak in body, and not a little in the mind, or rather he fell into lethargic reveries, from which he would sometimes arouse himself and say to his careful attendant, "I cannot sleep—I cannot rest. Is there any one with whom I am acquainted that would be the better of a little money—any person that wants a little money to do them good." His nurse—Mrs. Holt, a careful and kind woman—would on this venture to name some one. "Aye," said the sculptor, "you are right—in the morning I will send ten pounds"—and he never forgot his promise. With all his habits of

saving, he had maintained through life the old English practice of giving his domestics a present of money on his birth-day. The present in early years was not much—but it increased as he advanced, and before his death had reached to ten, and even in some cases to twenty pounds. Of all his attendants he loved most to speak to his old handmaid Bronze—he listened to all her talk—ventured sometimes to joke with her, and though she was none of the most delicate of cooks, was pleased with nothing so well as what she had prepared. He had now committed the charge of his house and studio to his principal assistant, Goblet, and seldom ventured abroad, but with his arm-chair wheeled toward the window, lay looking out on a little garden-plot of flowers, which one of his dependents had formed to scent the air and gratify his master.

The last time I saw this remarkable man, was before the opening of the exhibition of, I think, 1819. He was then unable to move but by the aid of his attendants; and having expressed a wish to Chantrey, whom he admired and loved, to see the exhibition of painting and sculpture, he was carried up stairs in a kind of sedan, and with his friend at his elbow, sat for a time looking round him. He then fixed his eye on some work which pleased him — muttered a few almost inaudible words—moved with his body in the direction of his object, and made a sign when he was placed in the right point of view. His power of expressing what he felt was never strong—it was less than ever now—but his good taste was in full vigour,

for he caused himself to be placed before all the best paintings, and his remarks went at once to their chief merits. Chantrey afterwards said, that his observations were judicious, and penetrated to the sentiment and meaning of the scenes and groups. When he was borne to his coach, he gave the persons who helped him a guinea each—put his hand to his hat, and bade farewell for ever to the Royal Academy. He was then eighty-two years old.

As his strength failed, he gradually withdrew himself, first from marble and next from clay, and finally from making drawings. Over the remaining years of the sculptor's life, during which he rather breathed than lived, I shall scatter such anecdotes as the curiosity, the kindness, or the malevolence of the world have gathered together. There will be something to commiserate, and something to commend—he was a singular mixture of weakness and strength—of meanness and generosity—of imbecility and talent.

That Nollekens was careful of his gains was known to all, and often alluded to even in his presence. Fuseli, himself towards the close of his life a hoarder, said, "Nolly was never known to bleed." His friends and acquaintances were not, therefore, sure of a kind reception when they went to solicit him for any charitable purpose—they could not indeed calculate the result—for the application which was received coldly to-day might to-morrow bring down a golden shower. It happened on a time, that Turner the landscape painter asked the sculptor for a subscription to that be-

nevolent institution, the Artists' Fund. "It's but a guinea, man," said Turner, in his blunt way. "But a guinea!" said Joseph, "that will do little for you—here, thirty will do better"—and thirty he accordingly paid. To Baily, a sculptor of well known talent, he was equally generous, when he solicited his help for another institution of the same nature. Nor was his benevolence, fitful though it was, confined to public bodies—on hearing that a poor neighbour was prevented from apprenticing out his son for want of the proper fee, he sent for the father, gave him an hundred pounds, and would scarcely listen to his thanks.

To his assistants he was uniformly kind and indulgent—the numerous works with which his studio was filled, were put into their hands to be wrought into marble from the models which he made; the working of the busts was settled at a regular price each, and as the draperies were all simple and the hair of easy execution, they could not fail to earn upwards of five guineas per week. The name of Nollekens stands free from all reproach amongst workmen on the matter of wages. Even after old age had benumbed his faculties, and he had declined accepting any more commissions, he continued to keep on some of his men at their usual wages, and one day, when his wife rated him sharply for giving full pay to a man named Dodemy, the sculptor called to the labourer, and said, "don't mind her, Dodemy, I'll raise your wages two shillings a week were it but to spite her." If he was not uniformly generous, neither was he uniformly sordid—he was not profuse with

the rich, and parsimonious with the poor. He, whom his workmen acquit of being niggardly, may be safely written down as a deserving master.

A man, who usually shaved and dressed him, apologized for coming in an old hat, saying, "I had a new one sent home this morning, and some thievish person stole it out of my shop." Nollekens put his hand in his pocket and gave him a guinea, saying, "there, that will buy you another." The same person afterwards, in an accidental conversation, stated, that he had but two shirts. "Have four then," said the sculptor, giving him a pound note. There probably might be something of a vaunt in his offer of thirty thousand pounds for the Elgin Marbles, when he heard that government hesitated at the purchase; but I am willing to believe there was more sincerity in his intention of bequeathing twenty thousand pounds to the Royal Academy to endow suitable schools of art, and defray the expenses of deserving students in all the galleries of Europe. The purchase which the government made of the Minerva Marbles prevented, however, his sincerity in the first offer from being tried, and the interposition of wily friends hindered him from fulfilling the other.

To match those acts of kindness or generosity, it would be easy to find a corresponding number of mean and selfish deeds. It must, however, be borne in mind, that Nollekens was really and truly a coarse, unpresuming, uneducated man, unpolished by his profession — of simple manners — without ostentation in his person or his household, whose mind was a stranger to every thing elegant save

sculpture, and who preferred a joke with his assistants, and a cup of tea with one of his living models, to the society of the titled and the learned. Such a person as this could not fail to gather money, and though one cannot help lamenting that his heart failed to expand with his fortune, I am not sure that we are entitled to stigmatize it as a crime. He considered himself as nothing superior to his handmaids and his assistants—he lived in their company, spending his money freely according to his own limited notions of his station: he was unable to act the part of a gentleman, and could not imagine the rank which genius entitled him to hold—and so he lived and so he died.

When Chantrey sent his bust of Horne Tooke to the Exhibition, he was young and unfriended; but the great merit of the work did not escape the eye of Nollekens. He lifted it from the floor—set it before him—moved his head to and fro, and having satisfied himself of its excellence, turned round to those who were arranging the works for the exhibition, and said, "There's a fine—a very fine work—let the man who made it be known—remove one of my busts and put this one in its place, for well it deserves it." Often afterwards, when desired to model a bust, he said in his most persuasive way, "go to Chantrey, he's the man for a bust—he'll make a good bust of you—I always recommend him." Nor did he hesitate to give a piece of marble to a deserving sculptor—"take it," he said, "it encourages more than money does." He sat for his bust to Chantrey, who always mentions his name with tenderness and respect.

The hour at length approached when Nollekens was to bid farewell for ever to all that he disliked or loved — that time so long looked for and so anxiously expected, which was to consign him to the dust, and allay the flutter of many an expecting heart, desirous of being in the way when the golden shower should descend. For a description of this righteous class of persons, I must have recourse to Smith, who seems to have noted down with much accuracy—I know not with what apprehensions—all new candidates, who sought by stratagem and wile to win their way into the last will and testament of the rich old man of Mortimer Street. "About this time," says the biographer, "he was courted by several legacy-hunters, who were beating about the bush. Amusing trifles from various quarters were continually placed before him in his room. One brought him a tall and extended chimney-campanula; and to make it look taller, placed it on a table close to his nose—another brought the French Giant in a coach, and he was delighted to see his head touch the ceiling. One person was desirous to be informed where he liked his cheesecakes to be purchased—another, who presented stale tarts, bought in a neighbouring shop, sent his servant in a laced livery to inquire whether his cook had made them to his taste—a third sent him the best pig-tail tobacco cut into such lengths as suited an epicure in that fragrant weed—a fourth sought to entice him to take a cockney ride in a hackney coach to Kensington, to look at an almond tree in bloom and pull gooseberries—a fifth sent him jellies, or sometimes a chicken with gravy ready made in a silver butter-

boat; and a sixth regularly presented him with a change of large showy plants to stand on the table, so that he might see them from his bed." It required an anxious observer to note all this. That Smith was such, his narrative sufficiently shows—he had his own expectations, and ere long he had reason to think of the saying, "blessed are they who expect little."

To Nollekens, indeed, weak in body and mind as he was, the scene which he daily witnessed must have been alike disgusting and dismaying. If he reflected at all, he must have cursed the gold which, while it could not purchase one minute's intermission from pain, nor soothe his apprehensions of futurity, had cast a spell over the greedy and the grasping, and brought them to his sick couch to insult him by their anticipating looks. There is every reason to believe, that all this, and more than this, was present to the mind of the sculptor. For years before his death he was in the practice of making wills—as friends grew slack in their attentions, or became too impatient to wait with decency of demeanour till nature did her worst, he drew his pen through their names—or cut off some hundreds or thousands from the bequests he had purposed to make them. The picture of his parting hour contains some sharp admonition—we may imagine the suspicious old man saying little, but thinking much—showing to his summer-friends some new prospectus of the goods they were to share among them as the rewards of their patient sympathy. There one saw thousands written against his name, another read his tens of thousands, while to some sagacious friend the testator whispered, "thou

shalt be residuary legatee—depend on it." All this time, perchance, the old man was muttering with Volpone—

> "Vulture and kite,
> Raven and gore-crow, all my birds of prey
> That think me turning carcass, now they come—
> I am not for them yet."

But, unlike Volpone, he had no feigned cough—no imaginary gout—no assumed palsy, nor ailment of the fancy wherewithal to deceive his visitors: all with him was real and unfeigned:—he was daily sinking under the load of infirmities, and not all the skill of Carlisle could retard his dissolution. Having lasted eighty-six years, he was released gently, and without suffering, from the ties which had so long united him to the earth, on the 23d day of April, 1823. His assistant, Goblet, was with him when he died.

On the day after his death the executors met, and that long-looked-for document was produced, which was to allay or increase the fever of many bosoms, and distribute—none could divine among whom—the sum of two hundred thousand pounds in money, besides the ownership of some valuable houses. When the deed was read, it appeared that few of those humble people with whom he had associated were forgotten; amongst them he divided some six thousand pounds in legacies, annuities, and other bequests—three of his assistants received an hundred pounds each—his nurse obtained fifty pounds yearly for life—Goblet, who was his companion at the rate of a guinea per day till he died, received thirty pounds a year—and none of this class seemed forgotten but Dodemy,

who, for some casual offence, had been struck out by an express codicil, dated 15th April, 1819. Sir William Beechey and Thomas Smith were executors, with one hundred pounds each;—and the residue of his vast fortune went to two persons, namely, Francis Palmer, and the well-known antiquarian, Francis Douce, friends of some standing. At this announcement there were murmurs—those who had soothed and flattered, and fed, thought their words and their gifts were unrequited; nor were there wanting others who imagined that a genuine document of later date would be found, making a more equitable distribution. "During the investigation of his papers," says Smith, "I was in anxious expectation of finding a will subsequent to the one produced, as he had been for years in the habit of signing many wills, in all of which he assured me he had recollected me and my family—'that you may depend upon, Tom,' were his words. In the year 1810 he showed me a list of the names of one hundred persons, to each of whom he said he intended to leave one thousand pounds." We all know with what feeling and taste an executor, with a legacy of an hundred pounds, has written a life of this artist: it would be an idle speculation to consider what use a residuary legatee with one hundred thousand pounds would make of similar materials.

Of all the artists whom I have chanced to know, Nollekens seemed, in manners and in look, the least calculated to succeed in the arduous task of bust sculpture; yet it is well known how triumphantly he pursued it. Homeliness and simplicity, partly the disguise of craft, did for this artist all that

courtesy and graceful manners have been able to do for others. Nollekens, in all things else a boor, had the rare merit of rivalling higher and more accomplished minds in his art. His reading extended little beyond the catalogue of the exhibition; he knew nothing of grammar, nor even of spelling. These scarcely credible assertions, his memorandums, and the codicils to his will (which I have examined) sufficiently prove—yet this man sent out works of art surpassed by few.

The claims of Nollekens to distinction are threefold—bust sculpture, monumental sculpture, and poetic sculpture. He attained to eminence in all—but to lasting fame, I apprehend, only in the first; and even there the permanent meed is secured to him more from the lasting importance of some of his subjects than from the splendour of the art with which he has invested them. No one will for a moment rank his busts with those of Roubiliac or Chantrey.

They are, however, unaffected, and elegant. There is no attempt to raise ordinary heads into the region of the heroic, nor to give to even eminent mortals the looks of gods. The best are simple without weakness, and serene without austerity. In woman he took beauty as he found it, and of man he gave the mind, and no more, which was spread visibly before him. There is little dignity, but much truth; sometimes mechanic vigour—never exaggeration. It cannot be denied, however, that his simplicity is often tame, his serenity languid—that his women are often beautiful without sentiment—and that in his men he is apt to miss that manly breadth of character which

is the token of all that is great and noble. The artist who makes the portrait of a man of high merit, yet puts no merit into his looks, and says he saw none, errs in two material points—in art as well as in observation. Look on all eminent heads painted by eminent artists, and there genius is stamped, so that he who runs may read. They saw, or imagined they saw the man, in his moments of inspiration, when the full vigour of thought was quick, and he had arisen above his work-day looks, with his soul in his eyes and on his brow. Nollekens rarely, if ever, saw so deeply as this.

The chief attraction about his hundred busts—for that number and more he made, besides many duplicates — was ease and simplicity — the chief defect is want of dignity and sentiment. This is as visible in his models as in his marbles:—the latter were chiefly the work of his assistants; the former were all his own — but what the model wanted the marble could not well possess.

In transferring the likeness of the plaster to the stone, much depends on the accuracy of those who rough-hew the bust—much more on the skill of him who carves, and not a little on the quality of the marble. If the marble is something dull and opaque, close copyism will do, because the materials resemble each other; but if the marble is more transparent, a bolder mode of treatment is demanded—for the lucid beauty of the stone gives something of the effect of carving in chrystal—the markings of thought and touches of sentiment are lost in light — deeper and grosser lines and touchings are necessary. Such must frequently be the difference of the marble from the model—but the

difference between the model itself and the living original must be much greater still. In all busts —I speak of works of the most eminent—the eyes are deeper sunk, the hollows on each side of the nostrils deeper, and the corners of the mouth more strongly given than in life. Nay, it is seldom indeed that the measurements of what would seem most important parts correspond with the flesh and blood. An artist who knows his profession never aggravates any of the deformities of nature—a wide mouth he never widens, a long nose he never lengthens, nor does he make a narrow forehead narrower. There are other differences yet. A swarthy face and dark eyes will, when copied in marble, differ in most material points from the same face if it had a fair complexion and light eyes. To get the full effect of the black eye-lash and the dark eye, the sculptor must cut much more deeply into the stone than if he were seeking for the expression of the other. The contrast between the swarthy glance and the white material calls for deep shadows. No one knew the resources of his art better than Nollekens—but he did not always work successfully. He had less mastery in his treatment of the eye than in any other part of the human frame.

It may be interesting to some readers to be told that of his hundred busts forty were of ladies, and not a few of these of the highest rank—for example, an empress of Russia, a princess of Wales, the consort of Frederick Duke of York, and five British duchesses.

The monumental sculptures of Nollekens may be briefly dismissed. These works are in number

upwards of seventy, varying in magnificence according to the wealth or taste of the employers. There are among them single statues, such as those of Pitt and Rockingham, which merit notice, because of the persons whom they represent; and there are monuments, such as that of Mrs. Howard, which dwell in our hearts from their nature and pathos. But with a few such exceptions, the world would do no injury to the memory of the sculptor by forgetting this class of his productions altogether—there can be little fine art where there is no true dignity.

On his poetic sculptures he founded his chief hopes of future fame, and he considered them with the care, and wrought upon them with the diligence of one resolved to trust to no hasty effort in a matter concerning futurity. But his utter ignorance of classic lore could not fail to injure his works of this order. He saw, for example, but half, and less, when he saw only the Venus de Medicis—he ought to have seen the goddess breathing of Olympus, with her inspiring cestus on, soothing Helen to love, when Paris was at hand—or bearing Æneas, her beloved son, wounded and bleeding, from the tumult of battle, when assaulted by Diomed. He saw none of those glorious sights—he wanted that high genius which can render marble a diviner thing than what is present in models and fragments;—he could fashion a form coldly and mechanically correct—but he was unable to make it breathe of rapture and of heaven. Of his five Venuses—viz. Venus chiding Cupid—Venus sitting with her hands round her knees—Venus anointing her hair—Venus taking off her

sandal—and that called the Rockingham Venus—he himself preferred the one anointing the hair, and scrupled not to compare it with the famed masterpiece of antiquity. There is in it fine nature and fine workmanship, doubtless; but Nollekens wanted imagination, and he who is deficient in that ought to decline commissions for gods and heroes, and abide by things visible and earthly.

Something should be said of those sketches which he modelled in clay and hardened in the fire, hundreds of which were dispersed at the sale of his works. They consisted chiefly of formal groups,—the figures some six or eight inches high. Here we find all manner of attitudes and varieties of emotion—the positions are generally natural and unembarrassed, and grouped together by an eye skilful in arrangement, and conscious that the work had to satisfy criticism in a hundred points of view. There are mothers and children without number—women in all costumes, and men in every kind of monumental employment. Yet with all this variety a barrenness of fancy is everywhere visible—common postures and hacknied meanings abound—and, in a word, holding that the workmanship of Nollekens was at least as valuable as his conceptions, I cannot agree with those who think his sketches superior to his marbles.

JOHN BACON,

DESCENDED from an ancient family who inherited estates near Wincanton in Somersetshire, was born at Southwark in Surrey, on the 24th of November, 1740. His father, Thomas Bacon, was a cloth-worker, who, leaving his native county early, sought fortune in London with such indifferent success, that John when very tender in years was obliged to work along with him for the maintenance of the family. When five years old he fell into the pit of a soap-boiler, and was rescued with difficulty; and a month afterwards he fell before a loaded cart, and by an accident almost miraculous, the wheel passed over him without inflicting any injury. Though from ill health, or want of full employment, his father was unable to educate him as he wished, yet he was a fair English scholar, and showed some skill in composition after he had risen to distinction. He discovered an early love for pictures and figures, and even attempted to draw. Though employed in work of the humblest kind, he began when quite a boy to have those undefined stirrings of ambition within him, which made him desire some worthier pursuit, and ask himself the question, "How can I be satisfied with my present employment?" "Yet at this age," says Cecil, his biographer, "he concluded that happiness was in every man's power who could learn to discipline his own mind, and on this plan



he made a sort of philosophical attempt to command his own happiness."

The speculations of our young philosopher induced him, when he was fourteen years old, to apprentice himself to one Crispe of Bow Churchyard, an eminent maker of porcelain, who taught him the art of modelling the deer and holly-tree, the bird and bush, the shepherd and shepherdess, and birds of all shapes and beasts of every kind, such as are yet made for show or for use in our manufactories. That those early attempts contained the rudiments of his future excellence has been asserted by some, and denied by others; at all events they aided in preparing his hand for better performances, and these were not long in appearing. It ought to be mentioned that he was frequently employed in painting figures on plates and dishes:—those were probably a repetition of his models, with the addition of the duck in the pond, the angler and his rod, and the hunter with his hounds. At this early period of life, he principally supported his parents by the produce of his labours.

It was the practice of sculptors in those days to send their sketches, and small clay models, to the pottery furnace to be burnt; and these young Bacon examined with a curious eye, and a desire to imitate what he could not fail to see were superior to the groups and figures manufactured by his master. The sight of these works stimulated his ambition; he strove to model in the same style, and gave all his leisure hours to the fascination of his new pursuit. The figures which by day he painted or modelled, vanished from his thoughts

when evening brought leisure; and he proceeded to discipline his hand and eye in the severe school of sculpture, with the hope that the time would come when he might appear with no discredit amongst the artists of his country. But his desire of independence, and his veneration for his parents, held him in the resolution to make all these experiments during his hours of remission from labour; he felt afraid that if he relinquished certain bread, in a common occupation, for the visionary wealth with which art was tempting him, he might fail, and find few to sympathize with a failure, more grievous in its consequences to others than to himself: he accordingly took the prudent way to fame, and was an undistinguished labourer in the shop of Crispe, when, at the age of nineteen, he presented, not without many misgivings, the first work which he thought worthy of notice, to the Society of Arts. This, which received a premium of ten guineas, the secretary of the society entered merely as "A model in clay." Nor on any of the other eight works, for which he was afterwards awarded upwards of two hundred pounds, has his laconic historian bestowed more than such jottings as these: "For a model in clay, fifteen guineas;" "For a basso relievo in clay, twenty-one pounds;" "For a human figure as large as life, fifty-two pounds ten shillings." Such are the entries against the name of Bacon in the singular annals of this society. It is an injury to genius to conceal the character and objects of its early aspirations: of all that Bacon presented from 1759, when he was nineteen years old, till 1776, when he was thirty-seven, the secretary gives no better account than

I have quoted. From another source I learn that the first of his successful attempts was a small figure of Peace, after the manner of the antique.

How long Bacon continued in the pottery has not been told. During his apprenticeship, he is said to have first formed the idea of making figures in artificial stone; the invention is, however, of older date—he probably improved the quality of the material, and the manner of working it. It was natural enough that thoughts of this kind should arise in the mind of one employed in making figures in porcelain. Whoever has the merit of the invention, no one will deny to Bacon the credit of having rendered it popular. We find him a successful labourer in Coade's Artificial Stone Manufactory, Lambeth, soon after its establishment in 1769, and in great favour with the proprietor, who felt that his talents were making a profitable impression on the public. Groups and statues as large as life, coats of arms, sculptured key-stones, wreaths of flowers, and all that species of work known by the general name of ornamental, were here modelled, moulded, and burnt. Nichols in his History of Lambeth, published in 1784, speaks of this manufactory in these words: "Here are many statues which are allowed by the best judges to be master-pieces of art, from the models of that celebrated artist, John Bacon." Flaxman displayed his genius in the same place, and even Benjamin West, the President, laid down his brush for a time,

"Through suasive words or more persuasive gold,"

and modelled ornamental statues. To a friend

who found him in the manufactory, splashed with clay and labouring at a figure, Benjamin smiled gravely and said, "A painter, sir, makes the best sculptor."

On what terms Bacon was employed in making those ornamental statues there is no mention. For figures as large as life the Society of Arts gave him thirty guineas as a premium; and with this he appeared well contented: it is more than probable that the statue was only a cast—had it been an original the reward was so little, that the speculation would have been unprofitable. The fame of gaining premiums from a public society, was of course something to a young and undistinguished person; but in fact he continued to present figures and receive rewards till he was thirty-seven years old, and had been seven years an associate of the Royal Academy. One of the first works from his hand which caught public attention, was a colossal head of Ossian. The poems published by Macpherson were then exciting general attention, and a head embodying, with no small skill, the qualities ascribed to the blind bard, made the learned and illiterate stare when it was placed over the gateway of Coade's establishment.

When the Royal Academy was instituted, Bacon was twenty-eight years old. He entered as a student—received instruction in his profession; and saw for the first time an artist of name and fame exhibit the whole art and mystery of conferring on a rude lump of clay the image he had conceived in his mind. He was the companion of Banks and of Nollekens in those studies; and in 1769, had the honour of receiving from the hands

of Reynolds, the first gold medal for sculpture ever given by the Royal Academy. The subject was Æneas bearing Anchises from the burning of Troy—the figures some twenty inches high and the relief small—and I suspect one of his unsuccessful antagonists was Banks, for among the models of the latter I have observed two reliefs of the same subject, both of considerable merit. His reputation was farther established by the exhibition of his statue of Mars: West, when he saw it, said to one of his brethren, "If this is his first essay, what will this man be when he arrives at maturity?"—an observation creditable to both: yet proving that Bacon's earlier works had failed in making an impression on the painter. The statue obtained for our sculptor the personal notice of the Archbishop of York—a gold medal from the Society of Arts—and his election as an associate of the Royal Academy itself in the year 1770. Looking at it with eyes accustomed to the marbles of ancient Greece and modern Italy, we are apt to feel some surprize that it should have awakened so much emotion. But if we consider the state of sculpture at that period in England, we will soften the severity of our comparisons, and rank it with the best of those statues made upon academic principles—correct in outline, accurate in proportions—nicely balanced in action and skilfully modelled, and deficient only in that heroic sentiment and true touch of soul, which can animate and kindle the rudest shape, and without which forms worthy of Olympus are but clods of the valley. The statue is naked, of the size of life, with more of the soft graceful look of Adonis than of the

fiery energy of Mars. Whilst the sculptor was making the model, so imperfectly was the clay wrought together, that the figure shrunk down and the nether limbs were crushed out of proportion. A porter came into his study with a letter, and—never having seen a human figure in clay before—could not conceal his wonder. "What a fine fellow, (he said,) and with such short thighs too!" The sculptor looked at his work—saw what had happened, and repaired the accident of which he had been so unceremoniously admonished.

Bacon had made a Venus as a companion, before the exhibition of his Mars was over; and not having received any commissions for working them in marble was naturally enough anxious to see them in a secure place. This induced him to present both to the Society of Arts; and the letter which followed them seems to want nothing that courtesy could bestow to render it palatable to the members. "The honour you have done me in your acceptance of my statues of Mars and Venus, affords me an opportunity which I gladly embrace of acknowledging the many obligations I owe to the Society. It was your approbation which stimulated, and your encouragement which enabled me to pursue those studies which a disadvantageous situation had otherwise made difficult, if not impossible. Believe me, gentlemen, I never think of the Society without gratitude, and without the highest idea of the principles on which it is formed; and which justly place it among the institutions that do honour to human nature, raise the glory of a nation, and promote the general good of mankind." The Society

henceforth became the personal friends of the judicious artist. The uncourtly Barry gave them his pictures on Human Culture, and such was the ungracious mode in which he presented that splendid gift that he experienced much neglect from some of the Society, and had trouble in wringing from the grasp of the secretary the value of the materials for which he had expressly stipulated. In the art of acquiring friends and employment, our half-educated maker of shepherds and shepherdesses from the Southwark pottery was more than a match for one of the ablest of all the Academicians.

It would appear that Bacon had endeavoured to unite the profits of his engagement at Coade's Manufactory, with those arising from employment of his own: for some time before the period of his admission to the Academy he had attempted to work in marble, and as he was an assiduous student he began in the course of time to acquire the skill of hand necessary for that delicate task. He had a small studio in the city where he laboured in the evenings; gradually his name became known —commissions both of the ornamental and of the monumental kind were entrusted to his hand--and he began to look beyond the contracted circle in which he had hitherto moved. The city was of course an unfavourable situation--and accordingly Bacon now went to live in what his reverend biographer politely calls the West End of the town; in truth he took a little shop and lodgings in Wardour Street, a thoroughfare of no great dignity: it was here—in a studio half above ground and half below—that he commenced his contest

for bread and fame: and he soon was master of both. In this place he was found by Dr. (afterwards Archbishop) Markham, who had come up from Oxford commissioned to get a bust of the King carved for the hall of Christ Church. The divine, a most learned and generous man, having seen the statues of Mars and Venus, thought so favourably of their sculptor that he inquired his address, and now with his other works before him desired to know if he made busts, and would like to model one of his Majesty for Oxford. "I make busts," answered the sculptor modestly: "and would willingly make one of his Majesty if he would condescend to sit." "I shall manage that for you," said Dr. Markham, and waiting on the King, soon summoned the sculptor to come to the palace and commence his work.

Bacon dressed himself plainly and neatly, took the purest clay, his best modelling tools, a silver syringe for spirting water on the model, instead of spouting it discourteously from his mouth, and was conducted into the Royal Chamber by Dr. Markham. No man of his day excelled Bacon in that nice tact, which, discriminating between the overstrained and the polite, gives to each person what his rank or his sense of his own importance induces him to expect. The King, always a lover of simplicity, was pleased with the looks and still more so with the address of the artist, and said as he proceeded with the model, "Bacon, have you studied in Rome—did you learn your art out of England?" "I have never studied out of your Majesty's dominions," replied the sculptor. "I am glad of it, I am glad of it," answered the

King, "you will be the greater honour to us." The skill which Bacon showed in this royal bust, and the modest and unaffected bearing of the man gained much upon the King, who desired him to prepare a copy of it as a present to the University of Gottingen; a third was subsequently carved for his present Majesty, and a fourth for the Society of Antiquaries. The road was now opened to him, and he was not slow in availing himself of the facilities which it afforded, of winning the confidence of his Sovereign—and keeping it secure against all rivalry.

In sculpture there is a subordinate art—that of transferring the express image of the model to marble; and this is commonly accomplished by means of a measuring instrument technically called a pointing machine. The one which Bacon found in use when he commenced his profession was a clumsy thing, called, from its shape, the gallows. This bestrode the model—a pen dropt through a groove to the surface of the figure, which on removing to the marble, denoted the quantity of material to be cleared away. The objections to this instrument were two-fold; it could only take measurements in one direction, and on one side; and both model and marble required to be turned—a delicate experiment—before the whole could be rough-hewn. Bacon invented an instrument of a very superior kind. It is enough to say that with his machine you can point the statue standing upright—that the arm, as it may be called, which takes the measurements, reaches all round, and by means of a ball and socket-joint the measuring pen can be directed according as the model requires.

The merits of this valuable invention made it a favourite in France and other countries; and, though far eclipsed for accuracy and rapidity by the new instruments of Chantrey, it still continues in very general use. Hudon, the eminent French sculptor, on visiting London, saw this instrument for the first time in Bacon's study, and expressed himself so strongly concerning its beauty and its usefulness, that the inventor made him a present of one. Some time afterwards a gentleman who had come through Paris called on Bacon, and observing his machine, exclaimed in surprise, "So you have got Monsieur Hudon's instrument for taking points—I see you don't object to copying the French in some particulars." An explanation took place, when it appeared that Hudon had passed it off for an invention of his own.*

While these works were in progress, he married one whom he had long loved, a Miss Wade, and removed to Newman Street. The story goes concerning this removal that one Johnson, a builder, who had known Bacon when very young, and treated him with much kindness, prepared studios, shops, and all requisites conformable, on a large scale, and as a first intimation of what he had been doing, waited on the sculptor, described the premises, and bade him take possession. Bacon (the story proceeds) was surprised—nay alarmed—"I can-

* When Chantrey got his new instrument, he was so pleased with it that he caused correct working drawings to be prepared, and sent in a present to Canova; the illustrious Italian acknowledged the benefit which such an instrument would confer on art, but lamented that he could not find a head in Rome mechanical enough to comprehend the drawings!

not afford," he said, "to do such things—I have not the means." "I'll manage all that," replied the builder, "so remove—I shall never look for the money I have laid out until you are more than capable of repaying me." In the year 1774, the sculptor took possession of his new house and studios, the generous builder became a banker in Bond Street, and in the fluctuations of business, long afterwards, a serious run was expected to be made upon his house. Bacon heard of this, and remembering the kindness of Johnson, placed forty thousand pounds at his disposal, and strengthened him so that he withstood the storm. Such is the story, which, however, was either unknown or distrusted by Cecil, the friend of Bacon, for he has not alluded to it in his memoir. Nor indeed can I consider it as likely that any one should presume to lease and prepare extensive premises, for a man so shrewd and knowing as Bacon, without his concurrence.

The advantage of having a royal patron and an instrument with which a mason could rough-hew a statue in half the time formerly required, soon became manifest. He executed in marble some figures for the Duke of Richmond, now at Goodwood; a monument for Worcester in memory of Mrs. Withers; another in honour of the founder of Guy's Hospital;—and the City of London entrusted him with the monument of the illustrious Chatham. How he accomplished these tasks in marble is well known. In the very first work in that material which proceeded from his hand, he displayed both neatness and skill, and in every succeeding statue there was visible improvement; the flesh became

more flexible, the draperies more flowing, and when Chatham's monument was erected, half the people of London flocked to see a work which the prints of the day declared to be, "most magnificent." And magnificent it may be called, for the grouping is picturesque and pyramidical, the positions are imposing, and the symbols of wealth and trade and prosperity are scattered with an affluent hand. Chatham stands high and in the centre—and Commerce and Manufactures under his protection pour Plenty from the Four Quarters of the World into the lap of Britannia. These figures, however, both the allegorical and the natural, are somewhat affected; they are also too full of action, and too studious of looking picturesque. An eminent artist said to me one day, "See, all is reeling—Chatham, the two ladies, the lion, the boys, the cornucopia, and all the rest, have been tumbled out of a waggon from the top of their pyramid:"—as there is some truth in the sarcastic remark, I cannot wholly concur in the praise which Cowper bestows on either the Chatham of Guildhall or of Westminster Abbey.

> Bacon there
> Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
> And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips;
> Nor does the chisel occupy alone
> The powers of sculpture, but the style as much.

The Mars pleased Lord Yarborough so well that he desired to have a copy of it in marble; Bacon was glad of this, for he knew that his brethren looked lightly upon his performances, because he had never studied in Rome. To rebuke their eternal sarcasms about his ignorance of the antique,

he shortly after modelled a head of Jupiter Tonans, gave it the exterior aspect of time, and produced it amongst the connoisseurs, who, with one voice, inquired from what temple it had been brought. "He often remarked," says his reverend biographer, "on the affectation of many with respect to the antique, who are without taste for selecting what is really excellent in it. 'Call it' said he, 'but an antique, and people begin immediately to find some beauty. Look at that figure in the corner of my study, can you see any thing in it? Yet many who come here and at first take no notice of it, as soon as they hear it is a cast from the antique, begin to admire! Had I made it a few years ago it would not have produced me a shilling.'"

He found, however, some consolation in contemplating other sources besides the antique for inspiration. "I cannot grasp," he once said, "much less arrange at one time, several ideas. If I have any thing distinguishing, it is a knack at expressing an idea single and detached; I stick to my mistress *Nature*, and she often lends me her hand." "He knew," said one of his sons, "where his forte lay. I have heard him often compare himself to the cat in the fable, that had but one sure trick by which to save herself. He used continually to inculcate the importance of a man's attending to that one point in which he discovered his chief talent to lie; and mentioned himself as an instance of the success attending this principle."

When captious remarks concerning the antique assailed him, he consoled himself with the idea that he saw art through nature, and that he approached the dignity of ancient sculpture by the same road

which Phidias had walked before him. The boasted antique, he said, was found where he himself was seeking beauty and grace, and that the finest of all those wonderous statues of old was but the result of poetry acting upon the actual form and mind of man. Banks, I have heard, was one of those who taxed Bacon's works with the want of antique feeling; neither in his Mars his Venus or his Narcissus, a soft and graceful figure, would the brother sculptor allow the presence of poetic thought. Flaxman, too, at that time rising fast into eminence, concurred with Banks, and Bacon had little consolation save in his own good opinion of his works, supported by the almost general voice of the country. This indeed was most intelligibly expressed; his studios were filled with commissions, his banker respected him for the weight of his deposits; his name began to be coupled with that of Nollekens among the moneyers on Change, and the India Company seeing his shares in their stock increase, thought that a sculptor who was at once eminent in art and strong in Eastern interest, might be employed in recording in marble the actions of their heroes.

It was probably his increasing importance which brought on those fits of humility to which Cecil says he was liable. "We are all beggars at the best," said the moralizing sculptor, "but we are ready to forget it, and that is one source of our pride. Two beggars stand at a door; the one receives a penny—the other a guinea: it is well if the latter does not begin to imagine reason for the distinction: it is well if he does not swell upon it and turn in contempt upon his fellow. Yet this is but

a picture of a man's admiration of his gifts." This suspicious and sordid view of human nature made Bacon, as it well might, fearful of his fortune, and induced him to set a guard upon his feelings and receive with gladness the admonitions of his friends. Whatever might be the moral inferences which he drew from an increase of wealth, it is quite certain that his talent in acquiring it was strengthening—that he had the art of keeping it well together, and surpassed many who thought themselves clever in the way of laying it out to advantage.

In 1780—but a few years removed from the time when he was an obscure labourer in the manufactory of Coade—his reputation had spread over the island: his works had found their way into cathedrals, collections and galleries; he had become a distinguished member of the Royal Academy, and the companion of princes and peers. Work, lucrative work, continued to pour in. He had acquired but a little dubious fame by his attempts in classic imitation; and feeling, in his pocket and mind, that poetic sculpture was a poor pursuit, and moreover demanded thought and study, he leant more and more to the money-making line of art, and preferred commissions which dictated size, subject, and sentiment, to those where all the interest was to be created by the sculptor, and all the magic to be breathed from the marble alone. Much of the domestic and monumental sculpture of modern days is a sort of woful pageantry—a kind of religious heraldry, only impressive through the names which it records; and of this there is much in an opulent land like ours. It was at this period that Bacon received commissions for the

monument to Lord Halifax in Westminster Abbey, the ornamental groups on the front of Somerset House, the statue of Blackstone for All Souls' College, Oxford, and that of Henry VI. for the Anti-Chapel at Eton.

It was a story which the sculptor loved to relate in what manner he obtained the commission for Eton. A person, he said, called one morning at his studio, who had something of the look of a distressed clergyman seeking assistance. He had great respect for devout men, and satisfaction in relieving them when in adversity; and with this at his heart he desired his visitor to be seated. The stranger sat silent a little while and then said, "Pray, Mr. Bacon, have you ever been at Rome?" He answered in the negative,—"or at Wilton, to see the Antiques?" The answer was the same. "But you have surely been in Westminster Abbey, sir?" said the querist sharply. "Surely, sir," answered Bacon, "very often." "But I may as well," observed the other, "walk through your rooms and look at your works." He rose, and examined them attentively, saying, "Well—indeed —very well—excellent. And all produced too without going abroad. I can tell you, one thing, sir, and that is—you have no need to go. Now sir, you shall, if you please, make me a bust of King Henry VI. and here is half the price." The money was paid—the bust was made and sent home; upon which the sculptor received a polite letter of approbation, and the remainder of the price. The stranger in a few weeks appeared again in the studio of Bacon. "Your bust has but one fault, sir," said he, "and that is—it ought

to have been carried down to the feet—in short, I must have a full statue, to be placed in the chapel of Eton College: for this purpose I have left a sum of money by will—but, on second thoughts, it had better be done while I live, and you should set about it immediately were it not your custom to have half the price paid down at giving the order, and this is not quite convenient for me at present, though I think I can let you have an hundred pounds." "Pray, sir," said the sculptor, "don't let that be an obstacle, you have always shown yourself a man of honour—I shall leave every thing to your conscience, and begin the design directly." This lover of Eton demurred a little—brought out one hundred pounds—brought out two—and finally fingered out the full half-price, and paying it down, said, "There, that's my way—make the statue and get the other half."

On the death of the Earl of Chatham the government resolved to erect a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey, and designs from sculptors were requested. The practice of the Committee of Taste at present is to send a printed circular announcing the subject and price of each monument to the various artists; the designs are sent in by a particular day; the Committee meet, and from the samples in small before them, select the man who is to make the monument. The evil of this plan is, that he who makes a pretty sketch may not have genius to expand it into the size of life, or larger, and may be totally deficient in the skill of working out the very sentiment which his sketch suggests. In those days the Royal Academy had the power to name the sculptor who was

to work for the government, and Nollekens and Banks were entitled, in point of talent, to compete the matter with Bacon. The latter, it is said, pursued a surer course; he made his model much larger than usual, finished the figures which composed it with more than common care, and using his right of way to the palace, obtained for himself and his model an audience of his majesty. There was much in the design to please the king. It represented Chatham in the attitude of an orator extending the sway of Britannia by means of Prudence and Fortitude over Earth and Ocean. He was pleased with the idea—pleased with the workmanship—pleased with the pious demeanour of the sculptor—and, at parting, said, "Bacon, Bacon, you shall make Chatham's monument, and no one else." This conclusion was no doubt what the artist had contemplated; but it was far from pleasant to the Royal Academy, though they had the wisdom not to war with the monarch. Banks, I have heard, was deeply offended; but it is highly probable that the result would have been the same had the competition taken its regular course. The forte of Banks was in single figures of a poetic nature; he was unable to grapple like Bacon with the sober realities of life; and Nollekens never was very popular in monumental designs. Now, the school in which Bacon was educated, namely, the pottery, and the artificial stone manufactory, had made him acquainted with public feeling—had revealed to him the important art of addressing his productions to the grosser faculties of the people at large. In all that he did, there was a plain meaning, a sentiment which lay on the

surface; which ignorance had not to call on learning to explain, and which could be felt without any reference to the antique. It was indeed allegorical, but the darkness of the mystery obtained light from many ingenious devices, more graceful indeed than the labels of Rubens where he makes the Virtues row Mary of Medici in a boat, but yet of that nature; his Generosity had her pelican, his Sensibility her sensitive plant, Commerce her compass, and Manufacture her spinning-jenny. In sixteen competitions with rival artists it was his boast that he had been fifteen times successful.

Of the Chatham monument Cecil says, "It may perhaps be produced as an instance not only that true genius is the growth of the British isle; but that it may be fully ripened in it, unassisted by foreign aid." There is a picturesque splendour in the monument which pleases the eye, a riotous magnificence, but a want of simplicity and feeling. The outward shape, the grouping, the arrangement, the flow of drapery, and the fine workmanship, are all there, and art might seem to have performed such a miracle as Cecil supposes, were it not for the frozen looks of Bacon's allegorical ladies.

One day while he was in Westminster Abbey, he was accosted by a stranger, who said, "That monument to Chatham, sir, is admirable upon the whole, but it has great defects." "I should feel obliged, sir," said the sculptor, "if you would be so kind as to point them out to me." "That I will gladly," said the stranger—"Why here! and there! and there!—don't you see? bad, very bad!" and at every word he spoke he struck the places alluded to with the iron end of his walking stick, in a man-

ner that seemed likely to hurt the work. "But will you tell me, sir," said the sculptor, "your reasons for thinking those parts bad?" "I have already done so to Bacon himself, sir," said the critic, "so I shall not repeat them to you—I pointed out other defects too while the monument was forming, but he refused to be convinced." "What then you are personally acquainted with Bacon?" said the sculptor, not a little amazed. "O yes, sir," replied the other, "I have been intimate with him for many years; a clever man, sir, but obstinate." "Were Bacon here now," said the artist, turning away, "he would not like to hear a *friend* of such old standing speaking of his work so roughly."

Among the various monuments executed at this time by Bacon, that of Major Pierson, who fell in his successful defence of Jersey against an invasion of the French, is the most remarkable—not so much, indeed, from the way in which the subject is treated, as from the subject itself. Pierson, by a determined charge with a handful of men, repulsed the invaders, but in the moment when retreat was converted into route, a French soldier wheeled round, presented his musket at the gallant leader, and shot him dead. This was observed by the African servant of Pierson, who almost at the same moment when his master dropt, shot his slayer through the head and shouted—though the tears were in his eyes—to be thus avenged. I know not whether any of these circumstances are represented in the marble of Bacon, but they are expressed in a most touching and heroic style by the pencil of Copley. The monument of a person celebrated in a softer way—that to Mrs. Draper,

the Eliza of Sterne, was also executed about this time. It may be seen in the Cathedral of Bristol; but the charms, personal and mental, which the author of Tristram Shandy saw in the living lady, have not, in my opinion, found their way into the marble. He exhibited, also, a statue of Venus, and a colossal head of Jupiter; and to prove that in knowledge of the naked figure he approached, if he did not equal the ancients, he sent to the Academy his colossal figure of Thames. Those who desire to know how he contrived to represent a river, may see the Thames of Bacon recumbent in bronze in the Court of Somerset House:—that neither beauty nor majesty mingled in the sculptor's notions of this magnificent river, his work will prove; it is a cumbrous effort of skill, and justifies the question of the queen, "Why did you make so frightful a figure?" "Art," replied the bowing artist, "cannot always effect what is ever within the reach of nature—the union of beauty and majesty."

He was eminently skilful in the art of pleasing. Naturally irritable, he could command down his temper when it suited his interest; he would listen to the most absurd or the most cutting criticisms with a provoking simplicity of manner—thank the inflictors for their moderation, and baffle all attempts to wound or annoy him. "I was once walking through his place," says the Reverend Richard Cecil, "and on passing a statue nearly finished, I hastily said, 'Mr. Bacon, that leg is certainly too short.' I was passing on, 'Stop, stop,' he said, 'look again, for it never occurred to me.' 'I know nothing about the matter,' I

said, 'no doubt the leg is quite right.' 'I don't know that,' answered he, 'I have taken no other rule of proportion than the measure of my eye, and the remark of a *fresh* eye is always matter of serious consideration with me.'" By this kind of courtesy he won upon the vanity of human nature; the reverend gentleman walked away delighted with his own accuracy of eye, and probably praising the candour of the great sculptor. He carried this courteous dissimulation so far as gravely to assure a friend that he was particularly grateful to all who told him of his faults and defects, and laid a particular injunction upon him to mark his conduct and behaviour in business or company, and admonish him privately of his errors. This simple friend took upon himself this singular task, ventured to impugn some little freedom of conversation, hazarded a severe remark or two upon what appeared a seeking too anxiously after the vain things of this world, and "I met," said he, "with nothing but gratitude for my strictures, and had the happiness to perceive that my observations were not made in vain."

It would be unfair to omit that an artist who loved Bacon, but held his religious feelings in contempt, having accidentally heard that he was pressed for ready money, brought him a purse containing two hundred guineas. The sculptor gently blamed him for keeping so much money idle in his house—remarked that he had observed him look melancholy at times—hinted that this might arise from his erroneous notions on certain subjects, pressed upon him the propriety of making his will, and offered to draw one out. The man

consented—named some legacies to relations, and said, "Write down John Bacon, sole executor and residuary legatee." This our artist refused to write, and said he desired to accept of nothing; on the testator's death it appeared that his property was considerable.

The monitor above alluded to was probably away from his elbow when he made his audacious proposition to government to do all the national monuments at a certain per centage below the parliamentary price. His brethren of the modelling tool and chisel were at once incensed and alarmed, and not the less so when they learned that government, accustomed to enter into contracts for military and naval matters, looked with no hostile eyes on an offer which carried the appearance of profit. "Spirit of Phidias," cried Fuseli, when he heard of it, "*Bacon* is to do all the *stone work* for the navy and army—they ought also to give him the contract for *hams* and *pork*." He had lived before this on no agreeable terms with some of his brethren; his monopolizing proposal increased the feud, and countenanced the assertion of some that he was of a grasping disposition, and loved gain better than either art or religion. The government, however, finally rejected his proposal—I know not in what terms. "They have rebuked," said one of the brethren, "our presumptuous potter—only to think of a man without poetic feeling, or heroic thought, or knowledge of the antique, offering to commemorate our heroes—why he is not fit to act as their *undertaker*." After all, Bacon perhaps was willing to

believe that by obtaining a monopoly of monuments he was increasing his means of spreading morality through the land. "I consider," said he, "that the profession in which I am providentially placed is perfectly lawful, and that the monumental part of it may be employed to an important moral purpose." The proposal to government could only have been made in simplicity of heart or in confirmed morality of intention, by one of whom his reverend biographer thus writes. "Religion with him was not the Sunday coat of a formalist; much less was it the vile cloak of the hypocrite. It was neither a system of mere opinions nor the cant of a party—but a change of heart, and a hope full of immortality, grounded alone on the work of a Redeemer. Occupied with business—exalted by favour—and tempted with wealth, religion still was his grand concern. Animated by this, his family dwelt in a house of daily prayer and spiritual instruction. He even used to watch his workmen while sick, and discourse with them upon the important subject that lay nearest his heart: in some instances, when he deemed it proper, he prayed with and for them at their bed side."

His ordinary sobriety of mood was not a little increased by the unexpected death of his wife, who after being his companion for ten years, and giving birth to five sons and daughters, died (February, 1783) in the forty-third year of her age. Her worth had been appreciated, and her loss was felt through all her line of acquaintance;—nor must we presume that such a woman was less sorrowed for than her memory deserved, because her husband

conducted another bride, Martha Holland, to the altar in the following autumn. We must consider that the sculptor was bereaved of a companion, his children of a monitor, and his domestic establishment of a head—the loss of one long beloved cannot indeed be readily if ever repaired, but religion would teach the artist not to consume his spirit in unavailing sorrow, and the sight of five young children and an empty seat at table might whisper that it was not meet he should thus continue alone. It is probable, too, that the brethren of Whitfield's chapel lent him their counsel in this domestic matter; at all events there is no tradition that any one of his visiting divines admonished him of the indecent haste with which he supplied the place of a mother to his children.

When these domestic arrangements were concluded, he turned his attention once more to his double labours in marble and morality—of the latter of which it is necessary to say something more—for he aspired beyond the fame of family visitations and sick-bed prayers. He wished to reform our church-yard literature, and accordingly wrote innumerable epitaphs in prose and rhyme, which, like some that Johnson satirizes, were epitaphs to let; they were directed against all complexions of sin and transgression, embraced all ranks, and touched on all professions, and generally assumed what no one denies, that man is but a worm, and unworthy of salvation, save through the mercy of God. Of compositions which were to supplant the rude and whimsical but frequently pathetic and characteristic inscriptions of our bu-

rial grounds, the reader will naturally desire to know something. I shall quote three:—

ON ONE WHO HAD BEEN A PROFLIGATE.

" Satan's captive long enchain'd,
All the viler passions reigned;
From this tyranny releas'd,
Say not miracles are ceas'd."

ON A PIOUS YOUTH.

" Precious plant of heavenly grace,
Waiting here a little space,
While the wintry months forlorn
Pass and spring's sweet winds return;
Then beneath propitious skies
Thou in living bloom shall rise."

ON ———

" Why write we genius, truth, or sense,
Or taste, or wit, or eloquence,
Or Christian virtues on this stone?
Thy name includes them every one."

There is little to praise in these efforts. The third belongs to that race without number which have sprung from the two epitaphs of Ben Jonson. Was it written in the *hope* that some one would die worthy of such praise?

The vanity or the simplicity of Bacon induced him to write a poetical conversation of a familiar kind for the purpose of composing that political agitation which prevailed amongst the people during the last twelve years of the last century; but the

demon of revolution was too strong to be exorcised by the feeble spells of the sculptor's muse. "He was a christian upon a larger scale than many," says his devout biographer, "whose piety is too much confined to their own heart and to their family and friends. His mind was continually on the wing to counteract the desperate attempts made, particularly for years past, to overturn church and state, order and godliness. He abhorred from his heart the violence of the Jacobins. 'These fellows,' said he, 'are famous at the pick-axe—they can quickly pull down a palace, but cannot build so much as a shed. They affect to illuminate the world, but it is by the light of a conflagration which discovers nothing but the desolation it spreads. Their disorder is treated as new, but it was always in human nature, and under new circumstances this disorder, which formerly lay more hid, is now come out upon the skin; or like a thief in the house—the villain filched before, but being joined to a band, he says, "will ye go with us and rob." Wise men, however, may learn much from this evil; among others they may see what sin is when it is ripe; it may be nipt in its growth by a frost, but in its season it is rank. It will in the end show, that however this philosophism may serve for *talking*, it is nothing for *doing*—except mischief.'" Those who are not satisfied with his prose are less likely to be convinced by his verse—I cannot, however, spare them a specimen.

Having introduced morality into church sculpture—purity into our church-yard literature—shown cause in prose and verse against the wild

doctrines of Lepaux and his dreaming speculators —and given proofs of his skill in private admonition and sick-bed prayer, Bacon finally attempted to preach. The subject was "Essential Truth."

"If I can know but little of even the world before me," thus wrote or preached the sculptor, "nor can I independently take a single step in it safely; what then can I do in respect to the next world without my bible? I find myself, indeed, in the midst of a system of deep moral disorder and perpetual vicissitude; if I listen to the philosophers, I hear them obtruding ten thousand opinions which only tend to prove each other fools. Besides which none of them offers any thing that *meets*, and much less that relieves my case. One cheering light only shines into this our moral darkness. It shows me the holy law I ought to obey, and declares my true character as a transgressor from the womb. I feel that very depravity and weakness in nature which it describes. I have erred and strayed like a lost sheep, and feel no health in me. In such a state—dare I venture my soul upon conjectures and probabilities? Once indeed I was driven to lay hold on the only hope set before me in the gospel from imperious necessity, but since I feel drawn to embrace it from its excellence. If infinite wisdom, holiness, power, and love unite in appointing my ransom only through a Saviour on his cross, God forbid that I should glory save in that alone. There I see the perfections of God harmonized—his law magnified—the evil of sin exposed. I see the worth of the soul—the vanity of the world, and the grace and grandeur of the gospel. With a dispensation so suited to my condition, can I hesitate? I tremble at the thought of being found negligent under a constitution in which God the Father is willing to become my father; God the Son my redeemer; God the Spirit my guide, sanctifier, and comforter. Besides which, in this high and warranted friendship, I find not only motive but strength for proceeding soberly, righteously, and godlily in this

present world, and confidence to wait assuredly for a better. I have as well as others looked around me for some other standing, but find I can abide possible consequences on no lower ground. I will, therefore, neither be frowned nor flattered out of a privilege of which I am so distinctly conscious. A man may as well tell me I never received nourishment from bread, nor light or warmth from the sun! Verily it is Christianity or nothing—or worse than nothing."

When sermons such as these failed, he insinuated his morality in the guise of a fable: the following, which is of a professional nature, and has the merit of being ingenious, is called "The Mirror and Picture."

"A mirror placed in a painter's study, thus vaunted itself against a design on the easel. 'Can you,' says the Mirror, 'covered with blots and scratches, pretend to vie with me, who exhibit so precise an image of every thing that comes before me, and where the variety is as great as the resemblance is exact.' 'I grant,' replies the canvas, 'that all my excellence consists in faithfully retaining whatever is committed to my charge; but it might serve as a check to your pride to consider that after you have been the companion of the wisest and best of characters, you are ready to admit a fool, or embrace a harlot.' *Moral*—The same objects and events which the superficial suffer to pass without a trace left behind, become a fund of knowledge to the diligent, who, being enriched with principle, and fixed by habit, stand among mankind a repository of all that is wise, and an example of all that is good."

Considering the imperfect education, the early disadvantages, and the arduous professional pursuits of Bacon, his attempts with the pen are entitled to approbation—he wants vigorous freshness of thought and happy propriety of language;

yet his Disquisition on the Characters of Painting and Sculpture, published in Rees's edition of Chambers's Dictionary, may be read to advantage by many. "It is probable," he observes, "that sculpture is more ancient than painting, and if we examine the style of ancient painting, there is reason to conclude that sculpture stood first in the public esteem; as the ancient masters have evidently imitated the statuaries even to their disadvantage; since their works have not that freedom of style, more especially with respect to their composition and drapery, which the pencil might easily acquire to a greater degree than that of the chisel; but as this is universally the case, it cannot be attributed to any thing else besides the higher estimation of the works on which they have formed themselves. Which is the more difficult art, has been a question often agitated. Painting has the greatest number of requisites, but at the same time her expedients are the most numerous; and therefore we may venture to affirm, that whenever sculpture pleases equally with a painting, the sculptor is certainly the greatest artist. Sculpture has indeed had the honour of giving law to all the schools of design, both ancient and modern, with respect to purity of form. The reason perhaps is, that being divested of those meretricious ornaments by which painting is enabled to seduce its admirers, it is happily forced to seek for its effect in the higher excellencies of the art; hence elevation in the idea as well as purity and grandeur in the forms, is found in greater perfection in sculpture than in painting. Besides, whatever may be the original principles which direct our feelings in the approbation of in-

trinsic beauty, they are without doubt very much under the influence of association. Custom and habit will necessarily give a false bias to our judgment; it is therefore natural, and in some measure reasonable, that those arts which are temporaneous should adapt themselves to the changes of fashion. But sculpture by its durability, and consequent application to works of perpetuity, is obliged to acquire and maintain the essential principles of beauty and grandeur, that its effect on the mind may be preserved through the various changes of mental taste."

There is the same clear good-sense and unlaboured mode of expression in that part of his disquisition which touches on the merits of ancient and modern sculpture. The taunts which he received from his brethren concerning his ignorance of the antique seem to have been forgotten when he took up his pen and sat in judgment. "It is conceived," he says, "that it will scarcely admit of a question whether the ancients or moderns have most excelled in this art; the palm having been so universally adjudged to the former. To determine in what proportion they are superior is too difficult an attempt. Wherever there is real superiority in any art or science it will in time be discovered; but the world, ever fond of excess, never stops at the point of true judgment, but dresses out its favourite object with the ornaments of fancy, so that even every blemish becomes a beauty. This it has done by ancient sculpture to such a degree as not to form its judgment of that by any rules, but to form an opinion of rules by the example. As long as this is the case, modern art can never

have a fair comparison with the ancients. This partiality to the ancients is so strong as to prevent almost all discrimination; it is the sole reason why many antiques that now stand as patterns of beauty in the judgment of most connoisseurs are not discovered to be copies. This is not more important than it is easy to be perceived by a judicious eye; for wherever there is a grandeur or elegance to an eminent degree in the idea and general composition of a statue, and when the execution of the parts (called by artists the treating of the parts) betrays a want of taste and feeling, there is the greatest reason to conclude that the statue is a copy, though we were ever so certain of its antiquity. Modern and ancient art can never therefore be fairly compared, till both are made to submit to the determination of reason and nature. It may be observed, that the ancients have chiefly confined themselves to the sublime and beautiful; and whenever a pathetic subject has come before them they have sacrificed expression to beauty. The famous group of Niobe is one instance of this kind; and, therefore, however great our partiality to the ancients may be, none can hesitate to affirm, that whenever the moderns shall unite great expression with great beauty they will wrest the palm out of their hands."

It is evident that Bacon felt, what few artists will allow, that many antique works which have descended to us are of very ordinary merit. Greece, no doubt, had dulness in her dispensation as well as other lands; and when genius and mediocrity embodied their notions in marble, the latter had almost as fair a chance for life as the former. Write a dull book and the moths soon

avenge the injured world—carve a dull statue and the lump of stone stands an eternal monument of dulness. Among the images with which Greece and her islands were filled, there were, unquestionably, many unworthy of her fame, and as her Roman conquerors had the taste to covet and carry away the best works, the most worthless were allowed to remain—and of these I am afraid we have not a few. Thus far all was well; but, in truth, the austere and majestic beauty of even the best Grecian sculpture, where action is subdued into repose, seems to have made little impression on the mind of Bacon. According to his theory, action is expression—activity of body is vigour of thought, and the illustrious sculptors of old had sacrificed sentiment at the shrine of beauty. No opinion could be more erroneous. The great masters of Greece knew that violent action is ungraceful, that it distorts the features, squares out the joints, and destroys, to a certain degree, that harmony of nature, which they worshipped; they, therefore, in general, discarded gesture and strengthened the mental expression—witness the resigned agony of the dying Gladiator—the faint struggle of the vanquished Laocoon—the tranquil woe of Niobe. To every unprejudiced eye those noble works are, from their dignified serenity, inexpressibly mournful; more vigorous action would, I apprehend, diminish the poetic pathos which they embody.

Some may ask, did praying for the sick, composing epitaphs for the dead, sermons for the devout, verses for those who were touched with jacobinism, moral fables, and disquisitions on

sculpture, impede Bacon in his way to fortune? On the contrary, they all united to help him on. To whatever subject he turned his thoughts, his worldly affairs prospered. His conversations with clergymen recommended monuments to his chisel —his fables and epitaphs were so many advertisements of his universal skill—his devout letters, filled with all that is righteous and self-denying in human nature, were quoted everywhere to his credit, and he was heard of among the sons of Mammon as well as among the children of mercy. A man so famed for his piety, a distinguished member of a Methodist congregation—one whose daily discourse was of the loveliness of charity and the beauty of good works, might have been suspected of neglect in the order of his worldly affairs; but no such symptom was at all visible. His bargains were skilfully made; his money was prudently disposed of where risk was small and gain large; and his house exhibited a rigour of economy, which induced even some of the divines, who haunted his table, to pronounce him overrighteous in the simplicity of his entertainments.

"His habits," says Cecil, "were frugal, but not penurious. This statement I feel warranted to assert, though I am sensible it has been and probably will be denied. Being favoured by the public with the execution of most of the principal pieces which have been done of late, he could not but acquire considerable property; but the prudence which as a father of a large family and in a precarious profession he deemed it necessary to observe—the plain and careless style of every thing about his house—the envy of some interested

contemporaries, and above all the motives of his conduct being greatly misunderstood, gave occasion to the objections which have been raised against his liberality. That there was sometimes the appearance of parsimony cannot be denied; and also that he has been known to lament a disposition towards it, while he dilated, as he frequently did, on the odiousness of the sin."

"He has," says Mr. Bacon, junior, "been thought hard and irritable when little mistakes have been made; but if he was at any time *little* it was in *little* things; for in greater affairs he always manifested a noble character of mind. He would give a considerable sum of money to some pious or charitable design on that very day in which he would burn his fingers by sparing paper in lighting a candle. I am ready to concede that Mr. Bacon did not possess that splendour of bounty proportioned to his means, by which some religious characters have distinguished themselves and put a dignity upon their profession. His original circumstances had begotten close habits; they had become even natural to him; and he had from sentiment and from principle a disapprobation of the expensive habits of the present day. His manner of living was that of the last age, and he thought such an example best for a large family, among whom his property was to be divided. I however mention, on the best authority, that as he had observed his own infirmities and those of the tender part of his family to increase, he had determined soon to enlarge his expenses for ease and retirement as far perhaps as Christian pru-

dence and its charitable requirements would permit."

This character, sketched by a friendly, and completed by a pious hand, is not without its shadows. The man who is *little* in *little* things is a sharp and severe master: it is but in matters of small moment that he is known to his servants, and what need they care for his generosity in gold when he is hard in silver? He who is captious about bits of wood—eloquent in the art of bargaining about brooms—severe in exacting his pennyworth of toil from those he employs, is to all intents and purposes a parsimonious man, let him gild his name with public bequests as brightly as he pleases. It is by his daily conduct and habitual expenses that his character for generosity or parsimony must be estimated: there may be other reasons for putting one's name into benevolent subscriptions; but nature speaks out in private, and he who is truly generous will feel for the lowly, and be ready to aid the distrest and the deserving, though unseen of others. The man who is readier with a sermon than a sixpence to the mendicant at his gate—who is so pious himself that he is afraid of encouraging profligacy by giving alms to beggars of suspicious morality—who stints his table lest excess of creature comforts should beget pride and lasciviousness in his household, and is austere and harsh to his dependents lest by mildness he might make them forget they are servants; may be a very respectable sort of person and of good repute with the world, yet he is but an indifferent Christian, let his attendance at church or at meetinghouse be as punctual as it may.

There is great difficulty in deciding as for men's motives—but the common opinion was that Bacon took mighty pains to impress three things on the world—to wit, that he was a great artist, wonderfully pious, and more than commonly loyal. That he was the first, no one save some of his brethren ever denied—that he was pious, the divines with whom he associated bore abundant testimony; and, in proof of his loyalty, he had his men, of whom there were fifteen or twenty, clothed in a sort of uniform and trained in military discipline, during those fearful years when machinations at home and invasions from abroad threatened the ruin of our country. Of his pious sentiments Cecil gives many specimens, most of which may be spared in a brief narrative like this, more especially as they are remarkable neither for originality nor force. His desire to keep the sabbath holy was always strong; on that day he allowed nothing like the semblance of work to go on in his household. "On those days," says Cecil, "if any particularly *insisted* upon seeing him, they were admitted; but commonly they went away, whatever their rank in life, in a short time, finding the only business they could transact with him then was to obtain part of a sermon. This, however, he managed with such address that his friends generally left him in perfect good humour. For though he often expressed his high disapprobation of some religious characters who mistake disgusting rudeness for godly zeal, and savageness of manner for faithful dealing, he was firm and inflexible in the defence of the truth upon every proper occasion." His military trainings were imputed, I

know not with what truth, to a desire of keeping well in the eye of the world, and more particularly in that of his sovereign, nor could it be much to the satisfaction of his dependents, since their uniform was provided from their own pockets. He had, there can be no doubt, a serious horror for Jacobinism; but we are all beings of mixed motives, and perhaps it was not unpleasant to him to have it circulated that while the *democratic* Banks was marched by a messenger to the office of the Secretary of State to give an account of his opinions, the loyal Bacon was training his men in the art of war, to sustain the crown in that hour of need, which many in those evil days thought nigh at hand.

Amidst all this diversity of occupation, bodily and mental, the artist continued his professional labours with the same ardour as ever, and with increasing success. His statues of Samuel Johnson and John Howard were made indeed at different periods, but they are conceived in a kindred spirit, and rival all similar works save the sublime Newton of Roubiliac. They stand one on the right and the other on the left of the entrance to the choir of St. Paul's; and the severe dignity of the philosopher with his scroll, and the philanthropist with his prison key, countenance the mistake of a distinguished foreigner who paid his respects to them as St. Peter and St. Paul. The statue of Johnson represents the sage and critic in the attitude of profound thought—his head, neck, arms and feet are bare, and over him is thrown a robe which reaches to the pedestal, displaying, amid the arrangements of its folds, the

manly form which it covers. There is an air of surly seriousness about it which corresponds with the character of the man—he stands musing and pondering; there is enough of good portraiture to satisfy those who desire likeness in statues—and of poetical skill and treatment in the costume to please those who, while they covet simplicity, are sensible that modern dress is injurious to the dignity of sculpture. At the foot of this fine figure is an inscription, from the pen of Dr. Parr, in a language which ten millions out of twelve that see it cannot read, and in which the works that render the name of Johnson famous are not written. To come a step lower, there is a period inserted between every word. In the ancient inscriptions, which this professes to imitate, similar marks are placed, but then spaces were not left between the words. In short, the mark in the old Latin inscriptions had a meaning—the dot in the modern pedantic epitaphs has no meaning at all, and merely embarrasses the sense.

A fit companion to Johnson is the statue of Howard. The courageous philanthropist tramples upon chains and fetters, and with the plan for the improvement of jails and hospitals in one hand, a key in the other, and benevolence in his looks, seems descending into a dungeon on his errand of mercy. On the pedestal is a bass-relief, representing him visiting the interior of a prison, and feeding and clothing the wretched inhabitants. The man whose memory this statue honours, received the thanks of his country for the eminent services he had rendered mankind, for finding his way into every dungeon, and by a wise employ-

ment of his fortune, and judicious and practicable arrangements, mitigating human wretchedness in prisons and hospitals. He died at Cherson, in Russian Tartary, in the year 1790, a victim to his benevolent attempt to discover a remedy for the plague. The statue of Howard was erected in 1795—that of Johnson in 1785, the year after his death.

In common with most eminent artists, Bacon was a worker in bronze, and the group at Somerset House attests with what skill he could manage that difficult material. Then and long after, an air of secrecy and mystery was observed concerning the art of casting in metal; and a process at once simple and easy was taught to be regarded as something magical. Of the materials which composed the external and internal mould—the mode of rendering them safe for receiving the liquid burning metal—the melting of the copper—the quantities of alloy, and the proper degree of heat, the working artists spoke a mysterious language, resembling in no small degree those conversations on Alchemy, so happily ridiculed by Ben Jonson.

"..... Let me see—
How is the moon now? eight, nine, ten days hence
He will be silver potata; then three days
Before he citronize; some fifteen days—
The magesterium will be perfected,
And then we've finish'd"

That Bacon maintained the secrets of the profession there can be little doubt, since the men who wrought his marble were not permitted to acquaint themselves with the arrangements of the foundry. His practice was to cast the figure in many pieces,

and then unite them into an entire whole by the process of burning or fusing the parts together. This plan had its advantages; it required small moulds, which were easily dried and readily handled—small meltings too of metal—nor was failure attended with the destruction of the entire mould of the figure. But it had this disadvantage—by the fusing together of many small pieces the just proportions of the whole were apt to be injured, and the figure liable to display an imperfect symmetry compared to a statue cast in one or two parts. The veil has been raised a little of late from the mystery of bronze casting. In the splendid founderies of Chantrey and Westmacott colossal statues twelve feet high are cast at a couple of heats, and the whole process is exhibited to any one whom curiosity or chance may happen to conduct to the artist's studio when the moulds are ready and the metal melted.

The works of an artist, unlike those of a poet, cannot be assembled before the biographer who would study their merits and describe their defects; they are scattered over the world. Nor in this case is a particular description, perhaps, very necessary; the style of our sculptor is unique and uniform, something elaborate and ostentatious, the postures a little affected—the action ambitious, the draperies graceful, but redundant. There is a strong family resemblance through all his works. The single statues embody the looks and character of the men whose names they bear, and the stories of his domestic monuments are related by allegories. The monuments in memory of Lord Heathfield, Samuel Whitbread, Sir George Pocock, Lady

Miller, Mason the Poet, and Judge Morton, are in England; that to the Earl of Tracton is in Ireland; the statue of Lord Rodney and the monuments to the Earl and Countess of Effingham and Dr. Anderson are in Jamaica; while the statue of Lord Cornwallis with the accompanying figures of Fortitude and Prudence, a work designed by Bacon and executed by his son, forms one of the ornaments of Calcutta.

A more minute description of some of these works will show that the sculptor's invention had its limit, and that the personification of the virtues or talents of the persons he commemorated was his sole resource—save when the commission was confined to a single statue. Truth tramples on Falsehood, and Honour presents the insignia of the Garter, in the monument of Lord Halifax, whose bust stands in the centre. Britannia places one hand on the medallion of Sir George Pocock, and with the other shakes a thunderbolt over the ocean where that eminent commander was so long a ruler. A figure of Poetry bends over the head of Mason, and laments his loss. It is needless to augment the list. Name the defunct, and a man of ordinary penetration may divine in a moment how the sculptor has treated him. It is indeed no easy task to commemorate moderate intellect and ordinary virtue; great subjects dictate the proper mode of treatment, but what shall the sculptor do with a man who only paid his taxes and compounded for his tithes—visited London once a year—married when he was twenty-five—and died at seventy, leaving his estate unencumbered and his second wife in weeds? On one occasion, in the absence

of Bacon, an order for a monument was left with the person who conducted his business :—the sculptor, on being informed of it, said, "Well, in memory of a private gentleman?—and what price was mentioned?" "Three hundred pounds, Sir." "Three hundred pounds—a small bas-relief will do—was he a benevolent man? You inquired that, I hope." "Yes, Sir—he was benevolent—he always gave sixpence, they said, to an old woman who opened his pew on a Sunday." "That will do—that will do—we must have recourse to our old friend the Pelican."

When he was retouching the statue of Chatham in Westminster Abbey, a divine, and a stranger, tapped him on the shoulder, and said, in allusion to the story of Zeuxis, "Take care what you are doing, you work for eternity." This reverend person then stept into the pulpit and began to preach. When the sermon was over, Bacon touched his arm and said, "Take care what you do, you work for eternity."

He affected frequently to speak lightly of his art, and seemed unwilling to allow it the station in public esteem to which the genius of its professors had raised it. Being, on one occasion, complimented on the beauty of his public works, and also on their usefulness, he admitted that he had striven to render them acceptable by the religious sentiment or judicious moral which they embodied; but yet, he added, laying his hand on the sleeve of his friend, "What am I in the sight of God but an humble cutter of stone?"

The career of the sculptor, whose "pride thus aped humility," was now drawing to a close. He

had lived fifty-eight years—every new season had brought an increase of employment and of fame—his health was good, and his looks fresh and vigorous. On the evening of Sunday, the 4th of August, 1799, while sitting happy with all his family, he was suddenly attacked with an inflammation in his bowels, and in spite of skilful physicians the disorder hurried him to dust in a couple of days, leaving two sons and three daughters by his first wife, and three sons by his second. When his will was opened, directions were found how his remains were to be honoured. He was buried in Whitfield's Chapel, Tottenham Court Road, under the north gallery, and a plain tablet was placed over his grave, for which he had written the following inscription:

"WHAT I WAS AS AN ARTIST SEEMED TO ME OF SOME IMPORTANCE WHILE I LIVED; BUT WHAT I REALLY WAS AS A BELIEVER IN CHRIST JESUS IS THE ONLY THING OF IMPORTANCE TO ME NOW."

He also directed that his second son, John Bacon, should continue in the profession of sculpture, and finish the works which he had left incomplete. He distributed his wealth, sixty thousand pounds, equally amongst all his children.

In person Bacon was about five feet eight inches high, well made, of a fair complexion, and with a look which betokened vivacity and address. He had seen much of the world, was intimate with the ways of men, and knew how to vary his conversation according to the character of those whom he desired to please. This devout man could be courtly among princes, joyous with the gay, enter

into calculations of loss and gain with the sordid, and sympathize in the rise or fall of stocks with the jobbers. Such facility is not uncommon in human nature—but it laid Bacon a little open to the imputation of hypocrisy—of which, however, no candid judge would venture to pronounce him guilty. He was charitable at least in theory; to resolve to do a benevolent act indicates a man who can take one step, at least, in the road of mercy; and it may be the fault of the reporters that I have heard oftener of his theory than of his practice. Of his modes of study little can now be known, for no one living remembers him in the days of his youth, when amid the toils of the pottery he was indulging in visions of future eminence and embodying those shapes which visited his fancy. He was an early riser, quick in thought, decided in resolution, and remarkable for the common-sense views which he took of all matters connected with his art.

Bacon's merits have been widely acknowledged —he felt where his strength lay, when he said his statues were his best works. He infused more good English sense into his sculpture than any preceding artist. Having little imagination, he willingly welcomed those figures which Spenser calls "dark conceits," because they came without study or meditation. His style of sculpture was, with the exception of his single statues, decidedly of that kind called the picturesque. The result of the whole is sometimes magnificent—the figures are well placed and commanding—the auxiliary symbols are scattered with profuse liberality, and the workmanship is ever neat, skilful, elaborate.

But a man can only infuse genius into his work in proportion as he possesses it himself; and the genius of Bacon was not of a high order. There is much external grace and lavish prettiness; but we trace few of those bright shapes and vivid sentiments which denote the hand of the inspired master. The manufacturer of images for a pottery is visible in many of his works—a good shape and interesting posture alone are aimed at. Nor was the making of artificial stone figures a pursuit more favourable for a mind which should aspire at stamping sentiment and feeling on its productions. Time with his scythe—Hercules holding an alevat—Apollo fiddling before a music-seller's shop—Minerva inviting customers to an insurance-broker's—and Mercury displaying his winged helm and sandals at a newspaper-office, had corrupted the original feelings of his nature, and taught him to consider shape, posture, and arrangement of drapery, as the essentials of his art. His natural strength exerted itself and shook off the fetters imposed by this sort of education, whenever he was commissioned to make a statue of one whom he had familiarly known. He placed as it were the images mental and bodily of Johnson, and Howard, and Rodney, before him, and thought of them alone till he completed his work: this is sufficiently visible in those fine statues—there all is original and unborrowed—and Bacon shows that, under more favourable circumstances, his general style might have soared far above the mere picturesque.



PORTRAIT OF MRS. DAMER.

London, Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1830

ANNE SEYMOUR DAMER.

"Mrs. Damer, daughter of General Conway, has chosen a walk more difficult and far more uncommon than painting. The annals of statuary record few artists of the fair sex, and not one that I recollect of any celebrity. Mrs. Damer's busts, from the life are not inferior to the antique; and theirs, we are sure, were not more like. Her shock-dog, large as life, and only not alive, has a looseness and softness in the curls that seemed impossible to terra cotta; it rivals the marble one of Bernini in the royal collection. As the ancients have left us but five animals of equal merit with their human figures, namely, the Barberini goat—the Tuscan boar—the Mattei eagle—the eagle at Strawberry Hill—and Mr. Jennings's, now Mr. Duncombe's, dog—the talent of Mrs. Damer must appear in the most distinguished light. Aided by some instructions from that masterly statuary, Mr. Bacon, she has attempted and executed a bust in marble. Cerrachi, from whom first she received four or five lessons, has given a whole figure of her as the Muse of Sculpture, in which he has happily preserved the graceful lightness of her form and air." Such were the words of Horace Walpole, in the year 1780, concerning

this lady: loveliness—relationship—old descent and lofty connections influenced his courtly pen; but a colder account must be rendered of her genius and her works by one who has never been cheered by her wit nor charmed by her beauty.

Mrs. Damer was born in the year 1748: she was the only child of Field-Marshal Henry Seymour Conway, (brother to Francis Marquis of Hertford,) and Caroline Campbell, only daughter of John, the fourth Duke of Argyll, and widow of Charles, Earl of Aylesbury and Elgin. Art seldom finds votaries of such high descent; nor is it usual for a sex, slim of frame and soft of hand, to enter voluntarily upon the severest bodily drudgery to which genius has taxed itself. Her birth entitled her to a life of ease and luxury—her beauty exposed her to the assiduities of suitors, and the temptations of courts: but it was her pleasure to forego all such advantages, and dedicate the golden hours of her youth to the task of raising a name by working in wet clay, plaster of Paris, stubborn marble, and still more intractable bronze. Nor did she shut her eyes upon other attainments, or allow herself to be wholly absorbed by this new enchantment. She acquainted herself with literature and with the world, improved her mind by study, and sharpened her faculties in the society of the witty and the learned. With the classic authors of England, France, and Italy, she made herself familiar; and added a knowledge of the writers of old Rome and made good progress with those of Greece. All this was not unnoticed by her cousin, Horace Wapole, who, pleased with her looks, her wit, and her enthusiasm, took plea-

sure in directing her studies and in talking of her talents.

It was soon publicly known that the only and beautiful daughter of Marshal Conway had forsaken the masque and the dance, and was become a worker in wet clay—an admirer of subdued lights —wore a mob cap to keep the dust of the marble from her hair, and an apron to preserve her silk gown and embroidered slippers; and with a hammer of iron in one hand, and a chisel of steel in the other, had begun to carve heads in marble, and, as Walpole remarked, to carve them cunningly. The story was scarcely credited—ladies of rank have before, as well as since, distinguished themselves in art—the miniatures of Lady Lucan, the drawings of Lady Diana Spencer, and the worsted pictures of the Countess of Aylesbury, are commended by good judges; and in our own day, Lady Dacre, to fine poetic feeling has added a skill in sculpture which gives her high rank with those who claim honour from genius: but few ladies have dared, like Anne Conway, to lift the chisel and modelling tool as well as the pencil. The story of her conversion to sculpture is worth telling. When some eighteen or twenty years old, she happened to be walking with David Hume—they were accosted by a wandering Italian boy, who offered for sale some plaster figures and vases which he carried: the good natured historian looked at the casts—conversed with the boy—gave him a shilling, and continued his walk. Sometime afterwards the young lady related in company the adventure of Mr. Hume and this wandering artist, not without a satiric touch at his squander-

ing his time on paltry plaster images. "Be less severe, Miss Conway," said Hume; "those images at which you smile were not made without the aid of both science and genius—with all your attainments, now, you cannot produce such works." She soothed her monitor by submission and smiles —inwardly resolving to try her hand in art, as much with the hope of confounding the historian, as with the expectation of finding pleasure in the attempt. She procured wax and modelling tools —set to work in secret—and in a few days presented a head which she had modelled to the philosopher. "This, now," said he, "is clever, and much better than first attempts usually are—you have found it is no easy thing to produce such works—but believe me it is much easier to model in wax than to carve in marble." She was not probably prepared for this; she, however, asserted that it could not be difficult, and that the hand which wrought well in wax would easily acquire skill in marble also. Resolving secretly to make this second experiment, she got marble and proper tools, and in a short while copied out, a little rudely indeed, the bust which she had made in wax, and placed it before Hume. He had nothing more to say, but to recommend a more skilful mode of finishing—for he could not fail to observe, that the hand was wanting in that nice delicacy of workmanship which distinguishes fine art. As he was no admirer of either poetry or sculpture, I cannot receive without suspicion the statement of one of her biographers, that her early sculpture "called forth his wonder and praise."

Of the wonder of Hume or the commendations of Walpole respecting this first work it may be unsafe to speak; but it is perfectly so to say that Miss Conway was sufficiently pleased with her own success to resolve on pursuing the study of sculpture, not as an amusement, but as the business of her life. The fair lady now endeavoured to banish from her mind all notions of distinction arising from high descent — the Seymours and Campbells became, as she imagined, names which denoted nothing unless embellished by noble actions and works of genius; and she resolved to make the sculptor's modelling tool and chisel the weapons which should win her a place, all her own, among the worthies of her country. Resolutions of like sort probably flit like visions across the minds of many high-born adventurers in painting and sculpture; but after a few trials, the difficulties become more and more apparent; noble shapes embodying god-like sentiments descend not like dew from heaven—excellence in art is found to be the work of time and labour even to the most gifted—and they lay their clay, their tools, and their marble aside,

"And leave that foul business to folks less divine."

Such amateurs possess not the fortitude of Miss Conway; sculpture, from the moment that she first loved it, became "a burning and a shining light" before her, and she laboured with patience and enthusiasm to discipline her eye and hand for works of lasting interest. Nor was she one of those self-willed geniuses who are above instruction, and desire, like an "intellectual all in all,"

to do every thing for themselves. She took lessons in modelling from the audacious Cerrachi, who plotted in 1802 against the life of Napoleon, and suffered by the guillotine—from Bacon she learned the art of working in marble—and Cruikshanks made her acquainted with the elements of anatomy.

Her progress, however, in spite of all her enthusiasm, was slow; and I suspect that her youth was not consumed, as has been said, in unremitting efforts to acquire the mastery over clay and marble, for we hear of no work of any note from her hand before the year 1774. Seven years before this, she, on the 14th of June, 1767, had given her hand to the Hon. John Damer, eldest son of Joseph, first Lord Milton, and brother to George, Earl of Dorchester; and this alliance, among its other unfortunate effects, must have disturbed grievously her progress in sculpture. Her husband, heir in expectancy to thirty thousand a-year, was at once eccentric and extravagant—those were the days of silk and lace and embroidery, and he adorned his person with all that was costly, and loved to surprise his friends and vex his wife by appearing thrice a-day in a new suit. Such a man was likely to be appreciated in London—he became the prey of tailors and money-lenders; the good counsels of his wife only increased his extravagance—he scattered a princely fortune in a few years, and terminated his life with a pistol in the Bedford Arms, Covent Garden, on the 15th of August, 1776, leaving his widow childless, and a wardrobe which was sold by auction for £15,000. It would have been but a waste of tears to have

lamented the death of such a husband as this. Mrs. Damer sought consolation in renewing her interrupted study of sculpture—in travelling for information on art through France, Spain and Italy —and by engaging eagerly in politics, a pursuit which seems to have had more attraction for the ladies of that generation than for their daughters.

Walpole has neglected to give us the names of those busts and dogs by his cousin which, according to his statement, rivalled the antique. From another quarter we learn that she made a group of sleeping dogs in marble, for her brother-in-law, the Duke of Richmond, and a second, also in marble, which she presented to her late majesty, Queen Charlotte, and which is that now in the possession of the Landgravine of Hesse Homburg. The busts to which Lord Orford alluded were, probably, that of her mother the Countess of Aylesbury, now placed as a monument in Sunbridge Church, Kent—that of the Viscountess Melbourne, which is in the gallery of Earl Cowper at Pensanger—her father, Marshal Conway—and the one of Lady Elizabeth Foster, afterwards Duchess of Devonshire ;—as to the merits of two of which works we have the doubtful testimony of Dr. Darwin:

> " Long with soft touch shall Damer's chisel charm,
> With grace delight us and with beauty warm;
> Forster's fine form shall hearts unborn engage,
> And Melbourne's smile enchant another age."

We may probably include also in the list of works referred to by Walpole, that bust in marble of herself, which she carved in 1778, and presented to the gallery of Florence. In that collection many

works of British artists are to be found;—it is an old custom of the sagacious Tuscans to make travelling artists members of their academy, exacting, in recompense for this honour, a painting or a portrait.

Of her own share in the execution of those works I cannot speak with certainty: that she made the models and wrought with her own hands at the marble, no one has ever doubted; but rumour was busy even at that time, diminishing her personal claims, and expatiating with all the arts of hint and innuendo on the assistance which she received from both Italians and English. All sculptors, however, avail themselves of the talents of others both in their models and marbles; it would be sad waste of original powers to lay them out on piles of clay and blocks of stone—they call in the aid of subordinate hands to prepare the model and remove the superfluous material from the marble, and touching particular parts and superintending the whole, claim the fame arising from the finished work—exactly as the general demands the merit of a victory which other hands achieved, but which his own head directed. It must be conceded, however, that the workmanship of Mrs. Damer's marbles is variable in its character far beyond the usual range;—here one recognises the effort of a hand of some cunning—and there it resembles the attempts of an half-year's student—in one place the material seems to have been gnawed with teeth rather than carved with chisels of steel, and in another the stroke has been delicately given, and the stone has yielded to a touch more than commonly experienced and skilful.

Her earliest works are smoothest—her latter productions exhibit most character; but neither are entitled to be named in comparison with the productions of first-rate artists.

Like Reynolds and Lawrence she was fond of making gods and muses of the heads of her favourites:—but of this species of adulation frequent use, even then, had lowered the value; nor do I do know whether the appearance of Prince Lubomirski in marble as a youthful Bacchus was received by the University of Oxford as a satire or a compliment. If that amiable foreigner had some right to such personation, and thought it kindly meant, perhaps the Honourable Penniston Lamb had as little cause to complain of being carved in the character of Mercury. The fair lady had no objection to receive in her own person the same sort of flattery: her unfortunate instructor, Cerrachi, modelled her as the Muse of Sculpture, and so well did she think of the work that she bequeathed it by will to the British Museum. The favourable opinion of her cousin, Horace Walpole, she secured, meantime, in a twofold way: she modelled and carved two kittens in marble, and placed them among his curiosities at Strawberry Hill—and she became an inveterate Whig in speech and act, loving whom he loved, hating whom he hated, and conceiving, with true feminine bigotry, that all who stood not within the contracted circle of her political affection had no chance to be saved.

The death of her husband and her father left her in every way mistress of her own actions; and she resolved henceforth to woo the Muse

of Sculpture with no divided affection. She had heard that this could only be done effectually by those who had studied in Rome, and in order that she might miss no means of inspiration, she determined to study in three nations—France, Spain and Italy. The period in which she chose to go abroad was thus far unfavourable—Britain was waging a fierce war with her American colonies, and as France had stept into the quarrel, the seas were filled with armed vessels of the three flags, and no ship could sail from an English port without some danger. It is true that the lady imagined herself triply shielded—her politics had made her look with sorrow on this unhappy war, and her resolution to owe her reputation to art had inoculated her with the disease of equality; she admired the Americans and she adored democracy. A French man-of-war, however, was no pleasing interruption to such reveries, and as the vessel in which she sailed was far inferior in force, a running fight commenced and continued for four hours. "I am not at all surprised," says Walpole, in one of his letters to the Countess of Aylesbury, "at the intrepidity of Mrs. Damer; she always was the heroic daughter of a hero—her sense and coolness never forsake her. I, who am not so firm, shuddered at your ladyship's account. Now that she has stood fire for four hours, I hope she will give as clear proofs of her understanding, of which I have as high an opinion as of her courage, and not return into danger." The French for that time prevailed—the packet struck its colours within sight of Ostend; but as France at that period forbore to wage war against domestic hap-

piness, Mrs. Damer was liberated and permitted to continue her journey. This happened in the year 1779.

To enable her more fully to enter into the feeling and character of antique sculpture, she studied night and day those illustrious Latins and Greeks, whose history, philosophy, and poetry yet maintain pre-eminence in literature. On the margins of her favourite authors—Homer, Herodotus, Demosthenes, Plutarch, Cicero, Virgil, Livy—she wrote profuse annotations, and made elaborate reference in her memorandum books to all such passages as throw light upon the genius, and manners, and institutions of those wonderful nations. Whatever thoughts arose as she contemplated the works of art so profusely scattered over Italy she noted down diligently, together with such remarks as critics had hazarded concerning the chief statues and paintings contained in the galleries. All these memoranda I have heard described as exhibiting research rather than an original spirit; but in her situation diligence on such subjects claims our praise. It was one of the pleasing delusions of this lady's life to believe that she was called upon to act a great part in the drama of British genius—she was continually imagining herself employed on some lofty work; and visions of future greatness haunted her fancy like those dreams of republican perfection which visited the accomplished Mark Akenside. Descended as she was from some of the most ancient families in Britain, she was desirous to let hereditary dignity sink, that the dignity of genius might have ampler scope to rise; and was not without hopes that she should

hear before she died the public voice hail her as Damer the sculptor, rather than as the Honourable Mrs. Damer, daughter of the Seymours, the Conways, and the Campbells. There is some vanity in this—but it is that sort which wins our respect, and belongs more or less to all the children of genius.

She returned from the galleries of Rome and Madrid, to mingle in the bitter affray of that contested election which ended in the return of her favourite, Charles Fox, for Westminster. Three ladies of birth, beauty, and wit, dividing Westminster into equal parts, set out with the resolution of conquering the whole motley mob of independent voters, and leading them to the hustings to give plumpers for the Whig candidate. These adventurous dames, Mrs. Damer, Mrs. Crewe, and the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, canvassed for their favourite with singular activity and success, rustling their silks in the lowest sinks of sin and misery, and, in return for the electors' "most sweet voices," submitting, it is said, their own sweet cheeks to the salute of butchers and bargemen.*

* The memory of the Ladies' Canvass lives still amongst the electors; but the higher rank and surpassing beauty of the Duchess of Devonshire eclipsed the charms and talents of her associates, and she alone is fully remembered. An old elector, who lived till lately, replied to my inquiries concerning it—"Lord, sir, it was a fine sight to see a grand lady come right smack up to us hard-working mortals, with a hand held out and a 'master how-dye-do;' and laugh so loud and talk so kind—and shake us by the hand, and say, "Give us your vote, worthy sir—a plumper for the people's friend, our friend, every body's friend.' And then, sir, if we hummed and hawed, they would ask us for our wives and

Nor was Mrs. Damer unwilling to appear on another sort of stage than that where the population of a city were actors—she aided the Duke of Richmond in establishing private theatricals, and recited verses and personated characters with some skill and applause. "She was," says one of her historians, "the Thalia of the scene. She appeared with unbounded applause in the character of Violante in 'The Wonder,' when Lord Henry Fitzgerald supported the part of Don Felix. Her Mrs. Lovemore, in 'The Way to keep Him,' and her Lady Freelove, in the 'Jealous Wife,' likewise excited great admiration." Later in life she loved to forget herself in the agreeable delusions of dramatic personation, and while she resided at Strawberry Hill, amid the splendid confusion of things, valuable or worthless, which Walpole had bequeathed to her, she gave occasional treats on the stage to such friends as her fortune or her talents allured to her table.

The chief business, nevertheless, of her life was sculpture; she played the politician for her friends, and enacted dramatic characters in mirth or in woe to while away the tedium of the long evenings in the company of her acquaintances, but she used the modelling tool and the chisel for her own pleasure alone. She dealt in heads both real and imaginary; she made a bust of Paris in marble, and another of Queen Caroline in terra-cotta. Her bust of Isis, in Greek marble, stands in the splen-

children, and if that did'nt do, they'd think nothing of a kiss—aye, a dozen on 'em. Lord, sir, kissing was nothing to them, and it came all so natural!" No wonder that Fox was successful.

did collection of Mr. Thomas Hope, and her bust, in bronze, of Sir Joseph Banks was admitted into the British Museum. Thalia, another of her imaginary heads, is in the hands of Sir Alexander Johnstone, and a bust of herself, after remaining in the gallery of Payne Knight, was transferred to the Museum. She also made the head of one of the Muses in bronze, and modelled for Walpole an osprey in terra-cotta, to which he courteously affixed this complimentary inscription:—

"Non me Praxiteles fecit, at Anna Damer."

Two colossal heads, representing Thames and Isis, may be seen on the key-stones of the bridge at Henley, and a statue in marble of George III. in the Edinburgh Register Office. The River Gods have been overpraised by Lord Orford in his letters to George Montagu; and it seems to be generally admitted that there is nothing remarkable about the royal statue, further than the boldness of the lady in undertaking a work so tedious and laborious. It is, in truth, a cold, meagre and unsatisfactory performance; and owes, I presume, the distinguished place which it occupies to the near connection of Mrs. Damer with the late Lord-Clerk-Register of Scotland, Lord Frederick Campbell.

She was an admirer of heroes, and willing to endow all her favourites with a touch of the heroic. As her own family had not been poor in laurels, she loved to speak of the Conways and the Campbells, and to the last hour of her life clung to the resolution of embodying some of their exploits in marble. Her father she loved as the first of men;

Walpole—no mean judge—considered the Marshal's character with equal admiration; and, what is of more importance, they were both backed in their estimate by Edmund Burke, who, in his memorable speech in 1772 concerning American taxation, thus dwelt on Conway's unsuccessful attempt to conciliate the interests and appease the animosities of the two countries. "I remember, Sir, with a melancholy pleasure, the situation of General Conway, who made the motion for the repeal; in that crisis when the whole trading interest of this empire, crammed into your lobbies with a trembling and anxious expectation, waited almost to a winter's return of light their fate from your resolutions—when at length you had determined in their favour, and your doors thrown open, showed them the figure of their deliverer in the well-earned triumph of his important victory, from the whole of that grave multitude there arose an involuntary burst of gratitude and transport. They jumped upon him as children upon a long-absent father. They clung about him as captives about their redeemer. All England, all America joined to his applause. Nor did he seem insensible to the best of all earthly rewards, the love and admiration of his fellow-citizens. *Hope elevated, and joy brightened his crest.* I stood near him; and his face, to use the expression of the Scripture of the first martyr, 'his face was as if it had been the face of an angel.' I do not know how others feel; but if I had stood in that situation, I never would have exchanged it for all that kings in their profusion could bestow." The accomplished daughter was proud of this eloquent attestation of her father's merits; she caused

it to be printed, and circulated widely, "under the impression," she said, "that the highest honour which can be paid to a deceased statesman in a free country, is to perpetuate in the recollection of all free nations the public applause which he received in his lifetime for his exertions in the cause of humanity and freedom." She proposed to celebrate him in sculpture in the spirit of Burke's speech—and to publish his correspondence, which, by all accounts, would have formed a nobler monument; but neither of these designs were fulfilled; the statue was never begun, and the Marshal's letters, only partially arranged when she died, were afterwards destroyed!

To the memory of her mother she dedicated, as we have mentioned, a monumental bust; and she still further designed to honour her by a group in marble. The countess's needle-work had rivalled the finest paintings; and numerous specimens of it were carefully treasured by her only daughter;—who nourished the idea of handing them down as heir-looms in company with some of the best of her own sculptures, to let posterity see that it was not through birth alone her mother and herself laid claim to distinction. She likewise included in her catalogue of family geniuses her maternal uncle, Lord William Campbell, son of the Duke of Argyle by Mary Bellenden, so celebrated for her beauty and wit at the court of George II. He was a person of undaunted courage, great bodily strength, and wonderful skill in all maritime affairs. "Once," said Mrs. Damer, "my father and mother, my uncle and myself, were in a boat on the Thames near Henley, when a cry rose that a man had fallen out of a barge and was drowning. Lord William rowed

instantly to the spot, and, dressed as he was, sprung into the river, and diving down sixteen feet deep, brought the man up in his arm, carried him to the bank, and restored him to life. I never beheld a more perfect image of a hero. He died in consequence of a wound he received at the commencement of the fatal American war. I wished to perpetuate his memory and his worth, and for this purpose I formed a design representing him in the act of rescuing the drowning man—I considered it one of the best of all my sketches." This design was never executed in marble. Lord William Campbell was the father of the present Lady Johnston—the beauty of Mary Bellenden has revived in her great grand-daughters.

But the fair sculptor was far from confining her enthusiasm to those of her own blood. Fox was her hero in the House of Commons—Napoleon her hero on land—and Nelson her hero on sea. Admiration is too weak a word to express what she felt—she absolutely adored them. With all the three she was personally acquainted. Nelson sat for his bust—so did Fox—and Napoleon promised too, but the wars, which came thick and fast, prevented this. When the hero of the Nile returned from the Mediterranean he waited on Mrs. Damer, and enabled her to make that bust which stands in the Common Council Room of the City of London. She loved to relate the conversations which she had with her "Napoleon of the waves"—and it was one of her favourite ideas to form a little book of his sayings and remarks, for the use of her young relative the son of Sir Alexander Johnston. She gave to the Duke of Clarence a copy of the bust in

plaster; and when his royal highness became Lord High Admiral a wish was expressed for one in bronze. Mrs. Damer, though then seventy-eight years old, began the work immediately, and saw it finished a few days before she died. The bust was afterwards presented to the Duke of Clarence, by Lady Johnston her cousin and residuary legatee, along with the coat which Nelson wore at the battle of the Nile. The latter precious relic has lately been deposited in a fit sanctuary—the painted hall of Greenwich Hospital.

Her acquaintance with Napoleon and Josephine has something in it of the romantic. During Mrs. Damer's early visit to France, in the time of the monarchy, she had become the companion of the fascinating Viscountess Beauharnois, and they parted with mutual assurances of esteem and remembrance. No correspondence, however, ensued, and Mrs. Damer heard no more of her early friend till, many years afterwards, a French gentleman waited on her with a splendid piece of porcelain and a letter from the wife of the First Consul. Much was her surprise to find that the lively and witty Madame Beauharnois of former days was the "Josephine Bonaparte" who now invited her over to Paris, that she might have the pleasure of presenting her to her husband. At the peace of Amiens she accordingly went to France, and was received with unbounded kindness by Josephine, and by her lord—as all the Whigs were in that hour of hollow truce—with much show of distinction. Napoleon, a master in the art of conversation, loved to talk with her about sculpture, and more particularly about Fox, for whom he ex-

pressed unbounded admiration. He requested the bust of his great English friend, and promised to sit for his own, of which he wished to make a present to Fox. Mrs. Damer returned to London enchanted with Napoleon's classic looks, and more by his conversation. She again saw Paris—but it was in a stormier period. Her amiable friend Josephine had yielded to a successor, and Napoleon himself saw those armies thickening around him which were soon to hurl him from his throne. She requested an audience of the Emperor, and presented the bust of Fox. Her name recalled earlier and more fortunate days; the friend of Josephine was received not only with civility but with kindness; and before she once more quitted Paris the Emperor gave her a magnificent snuff-box, with his portrait set in diamonds, which is now in the British Museum.

On the death of Horace Walpole in 1797, Mrs. Damer found herself owner for life of his Gothic villa of Strawberry Hill, with two thousand pounds yearly to keep it in repair, on condition that she should live in the house and maintain its original dignity. This place has become famous from its connexion with the studies of the accomplished author of the Castle of Otranto. But the colossal leg and gigantic helmet are not more out of keeping with the other members of that pleasing narrative, than this celebrated structure with the real genius of Gothic architecture. It is utterly wanting in external magnificence: the general effect is mean, and the parts which compose it are bald, disjointed, and meagre. But in the days of Walpole and Damer the interior made ample amends for want

of exterior attraction. It was filled with rarities in art and literature, and we may gather from some verses by Joanna Baillie, that in November, 1800, there was no visible decrease of its splendour. At this time those private theatricals, of which the new proprietress had always been fond, were revived at Strawberry Hill; and the poetess contributed an epilogue, of which it must have given pride and pleasure to Mrs. Damer to recite the following lines:—

"Whilst fogs along the Thames' damp margin creep,
And cold winds through his leafless willows sweep:
Whilst by the blazing fire with saddled nose
The sage turns o'er his leaves of tedious prose,
And o'er their new-dealt cards with eager eye
Good dowagers exult, or inly sigh—
'Thus have we chose, in comic sock bedight,
To wrestle with a long November night.'
'In comic sock!' methinks indignant cries
Some grave fastidious friend with angry eyes
Scowling severe—'No more the phrase abuse:
So shod, indeed, there had been some excuse;
But in these walls, a once well-known retreat,
Where taste and learning kept a fav'rite seat,—
Where Gothic arches with a solemn shade
Should o'er the thoughtful mind their influence spread,—
Where pictures, vases, busts, and precious things,
Still speak of sages, poets, heroes, kings,—
Like foolish children in their mimic play
Confin'd at Grandam's on a rainy day,
With paltry farce and all its bastard train,
Grotesque and broad, such precincts to profane!' "

The chosen companions of Mrs. Damer at Strawberry Hill were Mrs. Berry and her daughters—

(whose beauty and accomplishments had been so idolized by Walpole)—Mrs. Garrick, Mrs. Siddons, and "last, not least," Joanna Baillie. For their amusement she exhibited those dramatic scenes of which we have spoken—and played among other things the part of Lady Selina Vapour, in the comedy called Fashionable Friends, imputed to the sarcastic pen of Orford. An attempt was afterwards made to transfer this piece from before the packed jury of Strawberry-hill to the boards of old Drury; but the audience imagined that the veil was lifted too high from courtly life, and resented some of the sarcasms of situation and sentiment so bitterly that Kemble withdrew it from the united wrath of pit and boxes. In 1818 Mrs. Damer was persuaded to yield up her gothic villa to Lord Waldegrave, on whom it had been entailed; and purchased York House in the same neighbourhood, originally the residence of the great Lord Clarendon, and the place where Queen Anne was born. Here, during the rest of her life, she set up her modelling-stools in the summer, removing in the winter, with all the necessary implements of her art, to Park-lane.

Her heroes had all departed; Fox had followed Nelson to the tomb—the star of Napoleon had set for ever; and there remained none, save the sons of little men, whom she considered unworthy of her hand. But the longer she lived, sculpture rose higher and higher in her estimation. She talked with a romantic fondness of its powers, and imagined she saw more high qualities in it than mankind are willing to allow. She had contemplated it as the auxiliary of government in Greece; she had seen it the handmaid of religion in Italy;

and, turning her thoughts to the East, she conceived that her art might be made the chosen instrument of civilization and improvement there.

On this subject she held frequent conversations with her relative, Sir Alexander Johnston. From him she learned with surprise, that throughout Hindoostan and the Indian isles sculpture speaks a language civil and religious, contributing to keep up the delusions of heathenism and the immorality of some of their practices—and, in short, performing the same part which beads and images and reliques do in the Roman church. She conceived the design of substituting European and Christian subjects for those innumerable idols whom the natives adore. Understanding that the Rajah of Tanjore —educated under Swartz, the most wise and intrepid missionary since the days of the Apostles— had introduced civilization and science into his dominions, she resolved to aid him in his philanthropic attempts, and accordingly made a bronze bust of Nelson, whose victory of the Nile had given security to the British empire in India. This, she said, was the best proof she could give the Eastern prince of the admiration which, as an artist, she entertained for him on account of his encouragement of European arts and sciences amongst his subjects, and the respect which he had paid to the naval and military heroes of Britain by erecting a monument in his kingdom commemorating their achievements.

But this was nothing compared to what she contemplated doing for our brethren in the East. The head of Nelson was but the first of a series of the busts of heroes and statues of kings which she

proposed to set up in the places of those false gods who had so long misled the people of India. As Sir Alexander Johnston had benevolently made jurymen of the natives of Ceylon, so she resolved to set them right in matters of morality and religion; and, indeed, it cannot be doubted that a wise and judicious introduction of sculpture and painting might have great and beneficial influence among a people so much in the habit of having their eyes appealed to. But whether Mrs. Damer was fit for this high task, which she contemplated, is a different question: she was become old; and nothing of the woman of other years remained but an unsubdued enthusiasm. She did not live to make the experiment. In the spring of 1828 she began gradually to decline in health and fade in looks, and on the 28th of May was released for ever from the anxieties of life, in the eightieth year of her age. Her relatives, the Duke of Argyll and Sir Alexander Johnston, were with her in her last moments; to the latter she left, as heir-looms, the whole of her works in marble, in bronze, and in terra-cotta, as well as her mother's pictures in needlework; with directions that her working apron, her hammers, drills, chisels, and modelling-tools should be deposited with her in her coffin. This harmless manifestation of the ruling passion was accompanied by an order—which has been but too well obeyed—for the destruction of all her papers, which included, with her own memorandums on art, numerous letters from Horace Walpole and other eminent persons. She was buried, as she desired, beside her mother, in the church of Sunbridge, Kent.

In person Mrs. Damer was slim and elegant—in youth she was eminently beautiful—and her manners were always winning. Her vanity led her into the labyrinth of art—pride forbade her to retreat; and the fortitude of her perseverance cannot be too much admired. Her double claims on the world's notice made her difficult to please, and she had small toleration, on any subject, for such opinions as echoed not her own. An admirer of Payne Knight, she took part with him in his heresy concerning the Elgin Marbles; and, believing that the artists of Greece never effaced from their works the marks of the chisel, pronounced that the outline as well as the polished surface had departed from all those splendid fragments. Mrs. Damer was a bold woman at least, if not a bold artist: she sent her respects and good wishes to Napoleon as he departed for the last of his fields—she canvassed the third of Westminster for Fox—and she entertained the late Queen during her memorable trial! She imagined that the eyes of the world were upon her, and that it was her duty in all things to show how far genius was above the delicacies of birth and the etiquette of fashion.

If we may believe those who knew her best, she, after all, disliked no one seriously on the other side of politics but a certain nobleman, whom she accused of declining to fight a duel with one who had wronged him; and it is certain that though she entertained Queen Caroline, she never ceased to praise the fine taste and elegant manners of George IV. Her prejudice against her cousin, the late Lord Castlereagh, was softened into something like regard by the following characteristic circumstance: his lordship had promised to make Sir Alexander

Johnston Chief Justice and President of Ceylon, on which Mrs. Damer sarcastically remarked, "The fellow will cheat you—he is a Tory." Soon afterwards Lord Castlereagh sent express to Sir Alexander—had his commission drawn out—saw the great seal affixed—shook him by the hand, and wished him joy. This was late at night; on the following morning he fought the duel with Canning. Sir Alexander waited on him, when Lord Castlereagh said, with a smile, "You are come to congratulate me on my escape." "Yes," said Sir Alexander, "and to say that I cannot help marvelling at your fortitude last night—who but yourself could have transacted business?" "O, I had a reason for it," said his lordship; "had I fallen before the great seal was set to your commission, you would have lost the appointment, and my cousin would have said of me, 'The fellow, sir, was a cheat—he was a Tory.'" When Mrs. Damer heard this, the tears started in her eyes: "Go," she said, "to my cousin, and say I have wronged him—that I love his manliness and his regard for honour, and that I wish to renew our intercourse of friendship."

Her sex and situation render it difficult to estimate her real merits as an artist. If we look at some half dozen of her busts, and at most of her models, as the works of a female of rank and fashion, it is impossible to refuse high praise; but if we regard the whole of her works, and consider them only as they are intrinsically excellent, we shall be compelled to notice a woful difference of execution in the models as well as the marbles. For example, the marble bust of Nelson, which she gave to the Common Council of London, is

very rudely carved, while some of those possessed by Sir Alexander Johnston are wrought by a skilful hand. Bacon, we have seen, gave her lessons—Walpole says six; Cerrachi aided her in both modelling and carving; and Smith—of whom little is known save that he made a bust of Southey and a monument to Nelson—used to say, when her talents as a worker in marble were alluded to, "She be hanged!—she could carve little or none: I carved most of her busts for her:" showing, at the same time, a handsome hammer, and a complete set of tools, which she had added to the stipulated payment for his assistance. These insinuations getting abroad in the world, her pride was touched, and she resolved to prove in her latter days, as she had to Hume in her earlier, that she could carve as well as model. The belief which she held that on all the best sculptures of antiquity the marks of the chisel were left, denoting thereby that polish was unnecessary, may also have had its effect in inducing her to hold the chisel in future for herself.

Those works which we *know* to have been actually carved in marble by her own hand, are all rude in execution. There is no ease of hand—none of that practised nicety of stroke—that undulating rise and fall of flesh, which every one feels to be necessary, and which no one can hope to reach without great knowledge and practice. Let those, who murmur at the plainness of these remarks, look at her Nelson—a work on which she laid out her best skill, and which she dismissed from her hand in the belief that it would triumph over criticism. It is an image of death, rather than of the heroic: there are marks enough of the chisel, but any one

can see the hand that held it was unskilful; the mouth—that place where ignorance stops and knowledge triumphs—looks like a crevice in a rock—and the eyes have "no speculation."

Her models, though not so good as her early marbles, are widely removed from the coarseness of her latest works in that material. The conception, even when she had not the difficulties of stone to contend with, was generally better than the execution. She exhibits, however, few symptoms of poetic feeling—she aspires only to the gentle and the agreeable; there is little of dignity in her Thalia—of heroism in her Nelson—or of intellectual capacity in her Fox. Heroes and heroism were ever in her mouth; she fancied herself capable of any undertaking; dreamed her way through the world, planning much and executing little, and, like the poet in the Castle of Indolence, was—

"Fond to begin—but for to finish loth."

She lived and died in the vain belief that she was an artist in the spirit of the illustrious sculptors of Greece. Her idea of civilizing Hindostan with works from her own feeble hand was another "devout imagination," at which mankind will continue to smile: yet, considering the whole history, I cannot refuse to look upon her works, her character, and her life, with a feeling little short of admiration.

JOHN FLAXMAN.

Four brothers of the name of Flaxman, says the family tradition, fought on the side of the Parliament at the battle of Naseby. James was shot through both arms in pursuing the King; Francis died on the field; the third—whose name is not mentioned—went with the victorious army to Ireland; John, the fourth and youngest, relinquished arms, commenced farmer—some have added carrier—in Buckinghamshire; and third in descent from him was the great sculptor whose life and works I am about to delineate.

His father, a John also, was a moulder of figures, who failing to find employment with the artists of London, sought work in the country, accompanied by his wife, whose maiden name was Lee. In the course of one of these professional pilgrimages, his second son, John, was born, 6th July, 1755, in the city of York. When six months old, he was removed to London along with his brother William, who lived to distinguish himself as a carver in wood. The elder Flaxman appears to have been a worthy man, of diligence and skill in his business, who, besides working for such sculptors as gave him employment, kept a small shop in New Street, Covent Garden, and afterwards in the Strand, for the sale of plaster figures; and of his first wife, for he was

twice married, it is the common story that she was remiss in the duties of her household, and that to her carelessness the bodily weakness of her eminent son was to be chiefly ascribed. But the boy was weakly, and slightly deformed from his birth, and it surely was not a mother devoid of tenderness who brought him safely through that long disease, his infancy.

From childhood Flaxman was of a serene temper and enthusiastic mind. His weakness prevented him from associating with boys of his own age, and he had to seek amusement through many a solitary hour for himself. In a little stuffed chair, raised so high that he could just see over the counter, he usually sat during the day, with books around and paper and pencils before him, reading one hour and making drawings in black chalk another. His mother was frequently in the shop watching with her husband over the health and education of her patient little favourite. His grave but cheerful deportment, his thirst for knowledge and his love of drawing, began to attract the notice of the customers, and as the customers of a figure-dealer are generally people of some information and taste, they could not avoid perceiving that this was no common child; they took pleasure in looking at his drawings, in hearing him describe such books as he read, and in the rapture of his looks when, in their turn, they began to talk of poets and sculptors, and heroes. It was discovered too that, child as he was, he had not confined himself to the copying of figures around him, but had dipt into Homer, and attempted to think and design for himself. The

legends of our studios say that he was sometime under the direction of Roubiliac, who declared he saw no symptoms of talent about him. But this could not well be: Flaxman was but seven years old when the other died, and was, besides, so weak of body that he could not move without crutches. The story had its origin in the circumstance of his father showing some of his sketches to the Frenchman, who said they were remarkable as the productions of a child, but gave no other encouragement. But it is idle to speculate on the works of a child of seven years old; what could they be but crude feeble scratches?

"He very early," says one of his biographers, "gave indications of that observation and love for works of art for which he was distinguished in maturer life. His father was going to see the procession at the coronation of George the Third, and the child begged earnestly that he would bring him one of the medals which were to be thrown to the populace. He was not fortunate enough to get one; but on his way home happening to find a plated button bearing the stamp of a horse and jockey, rather than wholly disappoint his little boy, who was then in a very delicate state of health, he ventured to deceive him, and gave him the button. The young virtuoso took it and was thankful, but remarked it was a very odd device for a coronation medal. He was then five years old. At this age he was fond of examining the seals of every watch he saw, whether belonging to friend or stranger, and kept a bit of soft wax to take an impression of any which pleased him." When some one reminded

the sculptor of this after he had become eminent, "Sir," said he, "we are never too young to learn what is useful, or too old to grow wise and good."

Of all who noticed the talents of the boy, the most distinguished was the Reverend Mr. Mathew—a person of feeling and taste—the same who afterwards aided Flaxman in befriending Blake. "I went," said the divine, "to the shop of old Flaxman to have a figure repaired, and whilst I was standing there I heard a child cough behind the counter. I looked over, and there I saw a little boy seated on a small chair, with a large chair before him, on which lay a book he was reading. His fine eyes and beautiful forehead interested me, and I said, 'What book is that?' He raised himself on his crutches, bowed and said, 'Sir, it is a Latin book, and I am trying to learn it.' 'Aye, indeed?' I answered, 'you are a fine boy; but this is not the proper book—I'll bring you a right one to-morrow.' I did as I promised, and the acquaintance thus casually begun ripened into one of the best friendships of my life." The child is the mental as well as bodily image of the man. All those who had the honour of knowing Flaxman will join with me in saying that his extreme courtesy and submissive deference to others were natural and not assumed: as he was in his first interview with Mathew, so was he to mankind when his name, like that of the hero of the old romance, "had waxed wide." The solitary child laboured at his books and models incessantly. "He made," one of his biographers assures us, "a great number of small models in plaster of Paris, wax and

clay: some of these are still preserved, and have considerable merit; they were certainly promises of that genius and talent displayed in after years."

A great and salutary change took place in his tenth year. He had been hitherto weak and ailing; his studies had been repeatedly interrupted by long fits of illness, and, unable to move without crutches, he had seen little of the green fields, and shared in none of the sports natural to boys of his age. A flush of health came upon him at once; he grew strong, lively and active; the crutches were thrown aside, never to be resumed; and full of a new spirit, he thought of nothing but adventures such as happened to heroes of romance, and longed to have opportunities of showing his generosity and courage. A perusal of that enchanting book, Don Quixote, a tall folio, "translated by sundry wits of Oxford," wrought this enchantment upon him. "He was so much delighted with the amiable though eccentric hero," observes a biographer, "and his account of the duties and honourable perils of knight-errantry, that he thought he could not do better than sally forth to right wrongs and redress grievances. Accordingly, one morning early, unknown to any one, armed with a little French sword, he set out, without a squire, in search of adventures which he could not find. After wandering about Hyde Park the whole day without meeting enchanter or distressed damsel, he returned home rather ashamed of his romantic flight, and never again sought to emulate the exploits of him of La Mancha, though he always retained a great admiration of his character." This family legend lends some countenance to a

story which I may relate without attesting. Flaxman, it is said, was one day describing a statue remarkable for the truth of its proportions, and more for its heroic beauty, which he had seen somewhere in Italy, and wishing to give a clear idea of it, put himself into the position of the figure, and holding up his hand and extending his right arm, said, "Look, my lord, at me." The diminutive stature and disproportioned body of the great sculptor supply the ludicrous of a tale which more will laugh at than fully believe.

When health and strength came, Flaxman seems to have made up his mind to follow sculpture. He modelled and drew most assiduously; his father's shop was his academy, and the antique statues which it contained supplied him with form and proportion; their serenity of sentiment presented something akin to his own emotions. If it be true that Roubiliac said he saw no symptoms of genius about our artist's boyish compositions, he was not more fortunate in another artist, to whom in a moment of confidence, he showed a drawing of a human eye: "Is it an oyster?" enquired Mortimer. The joke of the jester made a deep impression upon the sensitive boy, and he resolved to show no more attempts of either modelling tool or pencil to those who consider it wisdom to humble the enthusiasm of youthful genius. His belief in his own talent was not to be shaken by a few light words; the feeling of internal power had come early upon him; and when he sat, a lonely child with his crutches beside him, reading of poets, heroes, and ancient worthies, he had resolved to

attempt something by which his name also might be continued to the world.

In his tenth year he lost his mother, whose death it is said, was the beginning of her husband's prosperity. He set his affairs in good order, ventured to lease a larger shop in the Strand, and, as London was not then swarming with foreign adventurers in the same line, his profits were such as enabled him to maintain his household respectably. He ventured—I know not how soon—a little farther; taking unto himself a second wife, whose maiden name was Gordon. She proved prudent and kindly—treated his two sons with great tenderness, and in due time gave them a sister. Of his step-mother Flaxman has been heard to speak with affection; respecting his own mother he was silent: whom he could not safely praise he refrained from mentioning. Some time after he had attracted the notice of Mr. Mathew, he was introduced to that gentleman's wife, a gifted and agreeable woman, the companion of Mrs. Montague, Mrs. Chapone, and Mrs. Barbauld. He was some eleven years old when he first saw this fascinating lady in Rathbone Place; and to her house he thenceforth frequently repaired during the evenings, to hear her read Homer and Virgil, and discourse upon sculpture and verse. "At this house," says one of his biographers, "where he was for many years a welcome visitor, he passed frequent evenings in very enlightened and delightful society: here he was encouraged in studying the dead languages, so necessary to him in his profession: by acquiring these he learned to think with the authors, and to

embody the ideas of Homer, Hesiod and Æschylus in a manner that no modern artist has exceeded." That Flaxman ever attained the scholarship of a Fuseli, no one has yet pretended; that he knew something of the Greek bards in the original is, however, certain; and it is probable that he helped his deficiencies out, as Pope is said to have done, by the common translations. His mode of education was very desultory; he attended no college; he distinguished himself in no eminent seminary; he gathered his knowledge from many sources, and mastered what he wanted by some of those ready methods which form part of the inspiration of genius.

It is said that Mrs. Mathew read Homer, and commented on the pictorial beauty of his poetry, while Flaxman sat beside her embodying such passages as caught his fancy. Those juvenile productions still exist, and are touched, and that not slightly, with the quiet loveliness and serene vigour manifested long afterwards in his famous illustrations of the same poet. The taste displayed in these induced Mr. Crutchely, of Sunning Hill Park, to commission from him a set of drawings in black chalk, about four and twenty inches high. The subjects, six in number, are all from antiquity: first, The Blind Œdipus conducted by his daughter, Antigone, to the Temple of the Furies; second, Diomede and Ulysses seizing Dolon as a spy; third, The Lamentation of the Trojans over the body of Hector; fourth, Alexander taking the cup from Philip, his physician; fifth, Alcestis taking leave of her children to preserve the life of their father; sixth, Hercules re-

leasing Alcestis from the Infernal Regions and restoring her to her husband. The praise bestowed on those early and imperfect works was grateful to the young artist; friends, more merciful or more wise in their criticisms than Mortimer, now foretold his future eminence. But fame, they warned him, was not to be attained without serious study, and assiduously working in the spirit of his own nature,—by musing on the heroic and lofty, and seeking to stamp on his conceptions that universal beauty acknowledged by all nations.

In his fifteenth year Flaxman became a student of the Royal Academy. In 1770 he exhibited a figure of Neptune, in wax; and in 1827 he exhibited the statue of John Kemble in marble: these were his first and latest works, and between them lies a period of fifty-seven years, intensely devoted to the pursuit of sculpture. At twenty years of age he had sent only ten pieces to the Academy; but his skill during that period was greater with the pencil than with the modelling tool. No one has praised his early attempts in sculpture: they could not, however, have wanted considerable merit, for his own portrait, quarter size, which he modelled in his twenty-third year, is very masterly and natural. One of those figures was Grecian Comedy, and another a Vestal; the remainder were portraits of friends.

I would fain persuade myself that a very fine bust of his father, one-third the size of life, was among the number: the brow is like the artist's own, but, I think, still nobler. This work, which I think must have been an early one, is now the companion of the heads of Hayley the poet and Howard the painter, in the keeping of Miss Flaxman.

He was now known at the academy as an assiduous and enthusiastic student. His small slim form—his grave and thoughtful looks—his unwearied application and undoubted capacity won upon the hearts of all who watched him, and he began to be spoken of as one from whom much was to be expected. His chief companions were Blake and Stothard: in the wild works of the former he saw much poetic elevation, and in those of the latter that female loveliness and graceful simplicity which have given his name a distinguished place amongst the worthies of art. With Blake, in particular, he loved to dream and muse, and give shape, and sometimes colour, to those thick-coming fancies in which they both partook. I have spoken of *colour*, for during his teens he made some attempts in oil colours, and with such success, that one of those pictures—an Œdipus and Antigone—was lately sold by auction for a Belisarius of Dominichino. Painters, we know, frequently model figures before they paint them; and it might be Flaxman's wish to see how his designs looked in colour before he modelled them—as was, indeed, the undoubted practice of the Greek artists. "It seems to me, (says Wilkie, in a letter written during his recent visit to Rome,) as if the artists of old began first to learn to paint and then to work in marble. There is such an artist-like freedom in the working of the material, that it reminds me of what we call surface in a picture, and such a perfect knowledge of the effect of light and shadow on that surface, that the hard stone is made to indicate sharpness and softness with as much ease as we see it done in a picture by Correggio. Sculpture and

painting seem much less allied now than in the time of the Greeks, when statues and bas-reliefs were painted, or in party-coloured marble, and when pictures were coloured sculptures in every thing but the flat surface." Of the accuracy of these views no one could be more sensible than Flaxman. But he never carried his admiration of the antique so high as to work his statues in party-coloured marble, or to paint and gild them as both Greeks and Goths did. He allowed the plain pure marble to tell its own story, and smiled at the cunning of Canova, who tinged his statues yellow to anticipate time, and coloured the cheeks of his Hebe to imitate the bloom of nature.

Having in his fifteenth year gained the silver medal at the Royal Academy, Flaxman became, in due time, a candidate for the gold one, the reward of the highest merit. One who knew him at this period thus described him to me as he appeared amongst the students. "Though little, and apparently weak of body, he was both active and strong—a match for most of his companions in feats of agility, and more than a match in all that regarded genius. He had an earnest enthusiastic look, and the uncommon brightness of his eyes and fineness of his forehead were not to be soon forgotten. His fellow-students perceived his merit —the grave, the mild, and the proud boy was generally respected; and when he became, in opposition to Engleheart, a candidate for the gold medal, all the probationers and students cried, Flaxman! Flaxman!" The poetic Banks was worsted in a similar strife by Bacon, but it was the fortune of Flaxman to be vanquished by a more

inglorious opponent. Of this contest he was not unwilling afterwards to speak, but the humility of manner in which he ever alluded to his own merits has occasioned his meaning to be misunderstood. He is reported to have looked on his disappointment as a fortunate humbling of a spirit puffed up and conceited. "I gave in my model," he is made to say, "at the Academy, and believed the medal was my own. I knew what Engleheart could do, and I did not dread him. The Council gave, as is usual, a subject to model in a specified time—mine was finished ere my opponent had begun—he completed his at length, and we had to await the issue. Conceit was my comfort—I had made up my mind that I was to win, and even invited some friends to cheer themselves at my table till I should return from the Academy with the prize. It was given by Reynolds to Engleheart—I burst into tears: this sharp lesson humbled my conceit, and I determined to redouble my exertions, and put it, if possible, beyond the power of any one to make mistakes for the future." Such is the account which one of the biographers of Flaxman writes of this matter: but all who knew the sculptor in his youth acquit him of the sin of self-sufficiency; proud he was—but in no other story has conceit ever been coupled with his name. It is well known that he thought himself injuriously treated—that he believed, in common with others, that his work excelled his opponent's; and that he said he hoped to live to model works which the Academy would find it no easy matter to match. In short, he was incensed at the decision—which certainly did little credit to the foresight of Reynolds

and the Academy. What is original seems at first to many merely *outrè*, and every deviation from the beaten track must needs be *error*. As Engleheart had studied longer than the other, they probably thought he was necessarily the cleverer—for most of them were believers in the singular maxim of their President, that all men are made equal by nature in genius, and that the hardest worker is the surest heir of fame!

Flaxman went home from the scene of his mortification and studied more laboriously than ever. But the business of his father, whilst it made him familiar from the cradle with the fairest forms of art, was of a nature too unremunerating to support him through those unpaid years of probationary toil to which sculptors are doomed. He was obliged during the day to lay aside his Homer, and seek bread where it could be found. It is as well, perhaps, for men of imaginative genius, that they are obliged to serve a rough apprenticeship in that great workshop the world—it acquaints them, as Milton wished, with seemly arts and affairs, instructs them in the ways of men, and points out the true path to fame if not to fortune. There is some fear, indeed, of crushing down the spirit by the weight of the yoke; but with minds of great natural vigour the discipline is wholesome. Ben Jonson laid bricks—Burns held the plough—Gifford made shoes, and all were, probably, the better for it. These were tasks less akin to poetry than the models which Flaxman made for the Wedgwoods were to sculpture. In truth, his sketches for those enterprizing and liberal potters were all of a kind with his early studies. They

consisted chiefly of small groups in very low relief —the subjects from ancient verse and history. I have seen and examined numbers of them, and many are equal in beauty and simplicity to his designs for marble. Before those days the porcelain of England had little external beauty to recommend it in the market. The greatest work of that kind was the famous "Royal Oak Dish;" an immense soup plate, of nearly two feet diameter, covered by a spreading oak, with Charles sceptered and crowned amongst the branches—his wig floating in vast redundance, and every golden acorn as large as the king's head! To excel such works was certainly not difficult, but Flaxman did more than excel them. The Etruscan vases and the architectural ornaments of Greece supplied him with the finest shapes—these he embellished with his own inventions, and a taste for forms of elegance began to be diffused over the land. The poor itinerant Italians who, wander about with trays of vases and figures, all casts or copies from fine works, were of considerable service to us in this matter; and still more so was the publication of Stuart's Athens, a work abounding in rich examples of all kinds. Rude and unseemly shapes were no longer tolerated, and the eye growing accustomed to elegance, desired to have this new luxury at table. Flaxman loved to allude, even when his name was established, to those humble labours; and since his death the original models have been eagerly sought after.

Though he had missed the honour which he coveted and deserved at the hands of the Royal Academy, his friends did not therefore lessen their

confidence in his talents. Mr. Knight of Portland Place commissioned him to make a statue of Alexander the Great in marble, and the sculptor, at this time no skilful worker in that material, if indeed he ever became such, employed Smith in executing it. During this period he lived with his father in the Strand, opposite to Durham Yard, modelling and sketching for all who employed him, but continuing his other studies with unabated enthusiasm.

From his twentieth to his twenty-seventh year Flaxman lived, as all young artists must do, who have no other fortune than clear heads and clever hands. His labours for the Wedgwoods were so far profitable that they maintained him; but then he was a frugal person, no lover either of strong drink or jovial circles, and indeed abstemious in all things save a hungering and thirsting for knowledge. The seclusion to which illness in early youth confined him, had caused him to seek for company in himself; and when grown up to manhood, and full of health and spirits, he still preferred his own chamber to public haunts, and casts from the antique and the poets of Greece and England to the society of the gay, the witty, and the beautiful. His feeling that disease had left him slightly deformed, may also, very probably, have had some share in determining his mode of life; Byron, we know, from his own melancholy story, imagined that all eyes were upon his lame foot; and Flaxman, though a man of a purer spirit if not loftier mind than the noble bard, may have shared in the same weakness. Whatever was the cause, there is nothing more certain than that from boy-

hood to old age he lived the same quiet, simple, secluded sort of life, working by day and sketching and reading during the evenings. Occasionally, when his daily task was over, he would work at the bust of a friend; but it was his chief delight to make designs from the poets, from the Bible, and from the Pilgrim's Progress. Such attempts, for so he called drawings of no common beauty, were only shown to favourites or to friends; they were arranged in portfolios according to the date of composition, and preserved as memorandums of his early notions and increasing skill.

During the ten years which preceded 1782, Flaxman exhibited some thirteen works at the Royal Academy—including five portraits in wax or in terracotta; and a sketch for a monument to Chatterton. The busts are not even named—no description has reached us of the monument of Chatterton—but of the other seven works a more particular account can be rendered. One was a model in clay of Pompey after his defeat at Pharsalia—a second of Agrippina after the death of Germanicus—a third Hercules with Dejanira's poisoned shirt—a fourth Acis and Galatea—and a fifth, the death of Julius Cæsar. Some of these were terracottas and in relief, others were in plaster of Paris, all were less than half the size of life, and none of them were in marble. Here is a sure proof of the early pecuniary difficulties under which this eminent man laboured—if patronage had smiled, the plaster-model would assuredly have been converted into marble, and the half-size expanded to that of life.

In the year 1782 he quitted the paternal roof, hired a small house, and studio, in Wardour Street,

collected a stock of choice models, set his sketches in good order, and took unto himself a wife—Ann Denman—one whom he had long loved, and who well deserved his affection. She was amiable and accomplished—had a taste for art and literature—was skilful in French and Italian, and, like her husband, had acquired some knowledge of the Greek. But what was better than all she was an enthusiastic admirer of his genius—she cheered and encouraged him in his moments of despondency—regulated modestly and prudently his domestic economy—arranged his drawings—managed now and then his correspondence, and acted in all particulars so that it seemed as if the church, in performing a marriage, had accomplished a miracle, and blended them really into one flesh and one blood. That tranquillity of mind, so essential to those who live by thought, was of his household, and the sculptor, happy in the company of one who had taste and enthusiasm, soon renewed with double zeal the studies which courtship and matrimony had for a time interrupted. He had never doubted that in the company of her whom he loved he should be able to work with an intenser spirit—but of another opinion was Sir Joshua Reynolds. "So Flaxman," said the President one day as he chanced to meet him, "I am told you are married—if so, sir, I tell you you are ruined for an artist!" Flaxman went home, sat down beside his wife, took her hand, and said with a smile, "I am ruined for an artist." "John," said she, "how has this happened, and who has done it?" "It happened," said he, "in the church, and Ann Denman has done it—I met

Sir Joshua Reynolds just now, and he said marriage had ruined me in my profession."

For a moment a cloud hung on Flaxman's brow —but this worthy couple understood each other too well to have their happiness seriously marred by the unguarded and peevish remark of a wealthy old batchelor. They were proud determined people—who asked no one's advice—who shared their domestic secrets with none of their neighbours, and lived as if they were unconscious that they were in the midst of a luxurious city. "Ann," said the sculptor, "I have long thought that I could rise to distinction in art without studying in Italy, but these words of Reynolds have determined me. I shall go to Rome as soon as my affairs are fit to be left, and to show him that wedlock is for a man's good rather than for his harm, you shall accompany me. If I remain here I shall be accused of ignorance concerning those noble works of art which are to the sight of a sculptor what learning is to a man of genius, and you will lie under the charge of detaining me." In this resolution Mrs. Flaxman fully concurred. They resolved to prepare themselves in silence for the journey, to inform no one of their intentions, and to set meantime a still stricter watch over their expenditure. No assistance was proffered by the Academy—nor was any asked; and five years elapsed from the day of the memorable speech of the President, before Flaxman by incessant study and labour had accumulated the means of departing for Italy.

The image of Flaxman's household immediately after his marriage is preserved in the description of one who respected his genius and his worth.

"I remember him well, so do I his wife, and also his humble little house in Wardour Street. All was neat—nay, elegant—the figures from which he studied were the finest antiques—the nature which he copied was the fairest that could be had—and all in his studio was propriety and order. But what struck me most was that air of devout quiet which reigned everywhere—the models which he made, and the designs which he drew, were not more serene than he was himself, and his wife had that meek composure of manner which he so much loved in art. Yet better than all was the devout feeling of this singular man—there was no ostentatious display of piety—nay, he was in some sort a lover of mirth and sociality—but he was a reader of the Scriptures and a worshipper of sincerity, and if ever purity visited the earth she resided with John Flaxman." "During his residence in this house," says Smith, in his imperfect sketch, "he was chosen by the parish of St. Anne, in which he lived, as one of the collectors for the watch rate, and I have often seen him with an ink-bottle in his button-hole collecting the money." He might have added, that his employment made him acquainted with many suffering widows and orphans, that he relieved them frequently by small donations, and gave it to them privately that he might not be seen of men; for he was not one of the stamp described by Southey.

"* * * * * always found
Among your ten and twenty pound subscribers.
Your benefactors in the newspapers;—
Whose alms were money put to interest
In the other world,..donations to keep open
A running charity-account with heaven."

Between his marriage and departure for Rome, he exhibited seven works only; nor were these his best. One of his first monuments was that in memory of a man of genius akin to his own—Collins, the poet, for Chichester cathedral. It represents the poet in a sitting posture, reading what he told Dr. Johnson was his only book, the Bible, while his lyre and poetical compositions lie neglected on the ground. Another work of a still higher order was his monument to Mrs. Morley, in Gloucester cathedral. She perished with her child at sea, and is poetically represented called up by angels, with her babe, from the waves, and ascending into heaven: the effect is inexpressibly touching—it elevates the mind and not without tears. In this, as in all his works, there is that serene simplicity which accords with holy thoughts. The accompanying monument to that of Collins, though a later work, may be mentioned here—it is in memory of Miss Cromwell, and personifies that passage "Come ye blessed." A female figure of great beauty and composure of look is carried up into heaven by angels—the grouping is bold and natural, and if ever figures were capable of rising from earth these are, for they are buoyant without any effort. He was sensible of the worth of these monuments, though he is said to have preferred a work which he made in 1787, of a very different character. This was a group of Venus and Cupid, executed for his early friend Mr. Knight, of Portland Place. That he should prefer it to the monument of the mother and child ascending to heaven

"I have but one book, sir," said Collins, "but that is the best."—*Johnson's Lives of the Poets.*

—a work of more than mortal loveliness, and expressing the sentiment of immortality, seems strange indeed. The love of antique subjects must have blinded him for the moment. Of the monument of a lady who died shortly before her child—of the sketch of an angel comforting a mourner, and the two busts of gentlemen, exhibited in 1784, and the following year, I know only the names. Having disposed of all his works, and taken farewell of his well-beloved sister and other friends—he at length set off for Italy in the spring of 1787. His departure was thus alluded to in the newspapers. "We understand that Flaxman, the sculptor, is about to leave his modest mansion in Wardour Street for Rome."

In Rome, he was struck with the grandeur of the remains of ancient art and the boundless splendour of the modern. He saw, he said, that the great artists of Italy approached, as near as the nature of their materials would permit, the illustrious poets of the earth—that they had impressed on all their works a grave beauty and divinity of sentiment which almost justified the superstitious adoration of the people. Into art, in fact, Italy poured out the first flood of her spirit —her young and enthusiastic vigour was directed to the task, and works of surpassing beauty became as abundant as flowers in spring. Learning was not then universal—men of genius had not been taught to dread the application of other rules than those of nature—the fullness and overflow of knowledge had not produced querulous taste and captious criticism; and though there was much that was objectionable, there was thrice as much

of what was noble and magnificent. Artists imagined without fear, and wrought with the full assurance of fame. We can read their confidence in their daring conceptions, and feel their enthusiasm in the almost superhuman rapidity with which they poured out their genius. Nothing can surpass the dashing freedom and masculine vigour of their productions. To strike off a great work at one glowing heat of fancy, was a common thing. Most of the noble works of the golden age of Italian art were hastily done. The walls and cupolas of new and splendid churches were immediately covered, as if by enchantment, with the miracles of painting and sculpture—the eager multitude were not compelled to wait till genius had laboured for years on what it had been years in conceiving. Those eager spirits seemed to breathe out their creations in full and mature beauty—performing at once, by the buoyant energies of well-disciplined genius, more than all the cold precision of mechanical knowledge can ever accomplish.

Into these works Flaxman looked with the eye of a sculptor and of a christian. He saw, he said, that the mistress to whom the great artists of Italy had dedicated their genius was the Church—that they were unto her as chief priests, to interpret her tenets and her legends to the world in a more brilliant language than that of reliques and images. To her illiterate people the Church addressed herself through the eye, and led their senses captive by the external magnificence with which she overwhelmed them. Flaxman perceived the extravagance and error thus nourished, and conceived the design of serving the Protestant Church by

a far different application of the resources of art. Those who examine the whole range of his works will see that they are in accordance with divine truth—that they embody poetic or moral passages of Scripture, and may be so arranged as to exhibit the whole history of Revelation, and the divine and moral dispensation of Our Saviour. That he directed his studies to this great purpose we have his own assurance, and that too confirmed by almost innumerable designs—many of them wrought into monuments; and all intended for the furtherance of devotion.

But like most of the children of genius, Flaxman was obliged in Rome to labour for his support; and in seeking for bread it was necessary to work to the inclinations of those who employed him. To this, or partly to this, we owe those splendid works which have made his name known amongst all civilized nations—he now executed for three elegant persons of his own nation, his illustrations of Homer, of Æschylus, and Dante. It has been said by one who was frequently in Flaxman's company during the making of the Homeric designs, that his diffidence at first was so great, that he transcribed the subject from the Greek vases, adapting them to his purpose; but that he soon became more confident—ventured to forsake those venerable models, and trusted to the resources of his own imagination. This statement may seem to be in some degree countenanced by what Flaxman himself says concerning the antique bas-reliefs. "The ancient Sarcophagi," he observes, "present a magnificent collection of compositions from the great poets of antiquity,

Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles—the systems of ancient philosophy with Greek mysteries, initiations, and mythology. The study of these will give the young artist the true principles of composition. By carefully observing them, he will accustom himself to a noble habit of thinking, and consequently choose whatever is beautiful, elegant and grand; rejecting all that is mean, and vulgar: by thus imbibing an electric spark of the poetic fire, he will attain the power of employing the beauty and grace of ancient poetry and genius in the service of the establishments and morals of our own time and country." There can be no doubt that Flaxman studied the exquisite figures on the antique vases, until he had saturated his fancy with the spirit of the days of old; but this was all. With an imagination such as his, it was easier for him to create than to copy.

Of the Iliad there are in all thirty-nine illustrations; and the artist has selected his subjects so that twenty-seven contain female figures. His taste was with the beautiful as well as with the stern —and it was thus he sought to soften down and relieve the scenes of carnage and peril with which the fiery epic abounds. He has varied his illustrations with great skill, and displayed everywhere a fine sense of the harmony of composition. All is grave, severe, simple; he has admitted nothing that is mean or merely ornamental—the beauty of form is subordinate to the sentiment—his heroes have no taint of brutality, nor his beauties of levity.

The commencing design represents

"The blind old man of Chios' rocky Isle"

invoking the muse: she descends to the united sound of his voice and his harp-strings, and he seems possessed with her presence. Then follows the angry parle between Agamemnon and Achilles, in which Minerva pulls her favourite hero back by the hair, and soothes him into submission. The departure of Briseïs shows less passion than the poet describes; but the forms of Patroclus and Achilles are a fine contrast of youthful vigour with the decayed strength of the two heralds. Briareus, whom Thetis summons to the aid of Jupiter, is one of those huge human brutes who ought never to be copied. There is nothing more truly hideous than an ugly face dilated to colossal dimensions—only the most consummate beauty can bear such expansion without becoming horrible to all eyes. Something of the same sort may be said of that scene where the colossal Otus and Ephialtes hold Mars in captivity —the god lies senseless on the ground, whilst the two mighty monsters sit watching over him, "as Athos or old Atlas huge." Of a very different character are the two sketches of Venus—one, where in disguise she invites Helen to the chamber of Paris, and the other, where she shines out and presents the half-reluctant princess to her Trojan lord. There is a tenderness, elegance, and delicacy, in the latter particularly, which I cannot overpraise. Hector chiding Paris, and Hector meeting Andromache and his child, are of a severer kind of beauty—a mixture of manliness and matronly love. The quiet dignity of the hero is truly wonderful. Of more stormy scenes indeed there are good store; but even the Minerva

and Diomed encountering Mars—Ajax defending the fleet against the attack of the Trojans—the contest for the body of Patroclus—the gods descending to battle, and Achilles striving with the spirits of the Trojan rivers, are marked by the same *subdued spirit of heroism.* One of the finest is where Thetis supplicates Chares and Vulcan for new armour to her son:—the goddess sits disconsolate, Chares approaches to comfort her, and Vulcan draws near supported by his two golden hand-maidens. But the one most to my mind, is that in which Polydamas, the soothsayer, counsels Hector to quit his chariot and attack the Greek ships. The hero checks his horses, and with his shield in one hand, and his spear in the other, listens, with a sad pleasure on his brow, to the counsel of the seer, the surest way to victory. Polydamas seems convincing him as he speaks, and you expect the defender of Ilion to answer, not in words, but by leaping direct from his chariot, and rushing at the head of his men over the foss. The artist, working in another material than "winged words," subdued the whole of these illustrations down to the mood of sculpture.

Those of the Odyssey are in number thirty-four, and are distinguished in many places by an austere domestic beauty—a simplicity, and at the same time a dignity, admirably in accordance with the calm majesty of Homer's second masterpiece. But here, as in the Iliad, recur those colossal monsters—we have Polyphemus quaffing wine with Ulysses—the gigantic King and Queen of the Lestrigons seizing and about to devour one of the Greek warriors—and the ravening Scylla with a

gaping mouth, and a writhing worm of a mariner in either enormous claw. All these, it is true, he found in the poem, but *there* fine drapery overshrouds much of those disgusting "Men Mountains." In outline their stupendous deformity is visible at once, and the human creatures at their side afford a literal scale to measure their extravagance by. Poussin in his picture of the blind giant Polyphemus sitting on a mountain-top, and piping to his flocks grazing in the distant vallies, has shown a fine sense of this sort of subject —he measures him with the mountains—gives him a placid, nay, a melancholy air, and removes to a distance all little things. But we soon forget these trivial defects amid so much excellence. Phemius amusing the suitors with song—Nestor sacrificing in the presence of Minerva—Ulysses presenting himself to Alcinous and Arete, and weeping at the song of Demodocus, are full of that staid elegance whose charm no eye can resist. How unlike is the "long-tost exile king" hiding his face in his mantle, and shaking with emotion at the poet's story of his woes to the same hero afterwards, when discovering himself he rises and exclaims:

> "I am Ulysses—famed o'er all the earth
> For subtlest wisdom, and renown'd to heaven!"

There are others, however, of still greater beauty. Penelope surprised in the act of unravelling the web—Mercury's visit to Calypso—Ulysses following the car of the Princess Nausicaa—Circe entertaining in her enchanted isle the wanderer—the Syrens seeking to allure his mariners with their magic song—the Harpies seizing the three daugh-

ters of Pandarus—Penelope reluctantly carrying her husband's bow to the suitors—and the meeting of Penelope and Ulysses—are all scenes which cannot pass away from the memory—they are so simple, so varied, and so moving. There are two designs which differ in character from their companions, and in which is observable that singular union of classic beauty with gothic wildness which brought our sculptor so much distinction in his Dante. These are, Ulysses terrified with the spectres who swarm about him in Hades, and Mercury conducting the souls of the slain suitors to the Infernal Regions. But the most pleasing, perhaps, of all, is the departure of Ulysses with his bride for Ithaca; her father entreats Penelope to stay, her husband leaves it with herself—she says nothing, but covers her face with her veil, and turns from Lacedemon. In all the art which I have seen there is nothing to excel the tranquil grace of Penelope—she is looking modestly down, evidently blushing all over; her heart is with her husband.

These fine designs were made for Mrs. Hare Nayler, at the price of some fifteen shillings a-piece; but the fame which they brought to the name of Flaxman was more than a recompense. Long ere this time of life he had shown, in numerous instances, that he regarded gold only as a thing to barter for food and raiment, and which enabled him to realize, in benevolent deeds, the generous wishes of his heart. As a fountain whence splendour, honour, and respect might flow, he never considered it—and in a plain dress, and

from a frugal table, he appeared among the rich and the titled, neither seeking their notice nor shunning it. In all these sentiments his wife shared. Those who desire to see Flaxman aright during his seven years' study in Italy, must not forget to admit into the picture the modest matron who was ever at his side, aiding him by her knowledge and directing him by her taste. She was none of those knowing dames who hold their lords in a sort of invisible vassalage, or with submission on their lips and rebellion in their hearts make the victim walk as suits their sovereign will and pleasure. No—they loved each other truly—they read the same books—thought the same thoughts—prized the same friends—and, like bones of the same bosom, were at peace with each other, and had no wish to be separated. Their residence was in the Via Felice; and all who wished to be distinguished for taste or genius were visitors of the sculptor's humble abode.

Patrons now began to make their appearance: the author of the Homeric designs might be countenanced with safety. For Thomas Hope, (but this was indeed an early friend,) he executed about this time, in marble, and very beautifully, a small-size group of Cephalus and Aurora, now in that accomplished person's magnificent collection; and the Countess Spencer commissioned him to illustrate Æschylus. From the remains of ancient sculpture he formed the character of those compositions; they exhibit the same simplicity—the same dignity—the same majestic composure as the designs of Homer, and their price was a guinea

each. Another patron now appeared—the eccentric Frederick, fourth Earl of Bristol, who was also Bishop of Derry. Flaxman was never covetous of gold; it was, however, necessary that the price of a work should at least cover the outlay—and, in his bargain with the *Comte-Evêque*, so long skilled in all the tricks of Italy, this seems not to have been the case. He engaged to execute a group representing the fury of Athamas, from Ovid's Metamorphoses, consisting of four figures of the heroic size—that is larger than life—for the sum of six hundred pounds—a price wholly insufficient. The proud sculptor made no complaint; he wrought early and late till he completed his group, and delivered it into the hands of the nobleman, who sent it to his seat at Ickworth in Suffolk. Such a work would have been cheap at two thousand pounds; Flaxman must have lost some hundred pounds by this piece of patronage.

He next undertook a task, than which perhaps none more difficult and thankless could have been suggested—the restoration of that splendid torso which is generally believed to be a fragment of a Hercules. Flaxman purchased a plaster cast, and proceeded to make the additions with his usual enthusiasm. When he opened his studio to the connoisseurs, they beheld not one complete figure but two—Hercules and Omphale. It could not be denied that the mutilated figure countenances the

I dwell less on the illustrations of Æschylus than I should have been inclined to do, having understood that the readers of the "Family Library" will soon possess ample means of judging of these beautiful specimens of Flaxman's genius.

restoration of Flaxman; but it might easily be fancied to countenance many other positions and actions—and every spectator bringing a theory of his own, it so happened that not one of them corresponded with our artist's restoration. Then, again, it must be known, that this fragment is considered by many as the remains of a far finer figure than any now in existence, and consequently the most glorious conception and the most beautiful workmanship were sure to fall far short of what the lost portions were supposed to be. No wonder, therefore, that some shrugged their shoulders—others silently dissented—and many openly disapproved; nevertheless, the restoration showed fine poetic feeling, and a true sense of the antique. Hercules, however, was certainly too ponderous a companion for so tender a lady, and some surly critic compared it to Milton's lion dandling the kid. Sometime before his death he caused this group to be destroyed—and there is no great reason for lamenting it.

The remains of ancient sculpture in Rome, and in other cities in Italy, engaged not a little of Flaxman's attention: he made many drawings, and still more numerous memorandums; the most valuable of which he subsequently embodied in his lectures on sculpture. "In early times in Greece," (says he,) "their figures were ordinary and barbarous, having only the rudest character of imitation, without any of its graces: their gods were distinguished by their symbols only—Jupiter by his thunderbolt—Neptune by his trident—and Mercury by his caduceus: not unfrequently these and other divinities were represented with wings, to

show that they were not mere men. The symbols, attributes and personal characteristics, as the arts improved, were derived from the poets and influenced by philosophy. The early figures of Jupiter and Neptune have no beards, but when Homer's verses became the canon of public opinion, the father of gods and men became bearded, and so did his brother Neptune. It is likely that Hercules was not exhibited with extraordinary muscular strength until the Greek tragedians had settled his character by their impassioned descriptions of his acts and labours. The winged genii on the Greek vases were introduced from the Pythagorean philosophy: and female divinities became lovely and gracious in the time of Plato—in fine, the different systems of philosophy influenced, as they appeared, the arts of design, giving a tone to their excellence and an indication of their character. The female divinities of those early days of sculpture were clothed in draperies divided into few and perpendicular folds: the hair of both male and female statues of this period is arranged with great care, collected in a club behind, sometimes entirely curled in the same manner as practised by the native Americans and the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands. Dædalus and Eudæus formed their statues of wood; metal was also used for various purposes of sculpture, as we learn from Homer, Hesiod, and Plutarch."

Such was the early state of sculpture in Greece. "The superior genius of Phidias," continues Flaxman, "in addition to his knowledge of painting, which he practised previous to sculpture, gave a grandeur to his compositions—a grace to his

groups—a softness to flesh, and a flow to draperies unknown to his predecessors—the character of whose figures was stiff rather than dignified, and the folds of drapery parallel, poor, and resembling geometrical lines rather than the simple but ever-varying appearances of nature. His statue of Minerva, thirty-nine feet high, was made of ivory and gold, holding a Victory, six feet high, in her right hand, and a spear in her left, her tunic reaching to her feet. She had her helmet on, and the Medusa's head on her Ægis; her shield was adorned with the battle of the gods and giants—the pedestal with the birth of Pandora. Plato tells us the eyes were of precious stones. But the great work of this chief of sculptors—the astonishment and praise of after-ages—was the Jupiter at Elis, sitting on his throne—his left hand holding a sceptre, his right hand extending victory to the Olympian conquerors, his head crowned with olive, and his pallium decorated with beasts, birds, and flowers. The four corners of the throne were dancing Victories, each supported by a sphinx tearing a Theban youth. At the back of the throne above his head were the three Hours or seasons on one side, and on the other the three Graces. On the bar between the legs of the throne, and the panels or spaces between them, were represented many stories; the destruction of Niobe's children—the labours of Hercules—the delivery of Prometheus—the Garden of Hesperides, with the different adventures of the heroic ages. On the base the battle of Theseus with the Amazons: on the pedestal an assembly of the Gods—the sun, the moon in their cars, and the birth of Venus. The height of the work was sixty

feet. The statue was ivory, enriched with the radiance of golden ornaments and precious stones, and was justly esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world."

It is to the patronage of the author of Athanasius that we owe the next great series of Flaxman's works—The illustrations of Dante. In those of Homer he was guided by ancient works of art as well as by the poet's verse; but the subject now presented to his fancy wanted wholly the former species of emblazonment: its images were as yet unembodied in marble, and the antique character of face would have been manifestly out of keeping with modern princes, and poets, and warriors. I cannot help, therefore, regarding his Dante as a more original work in every way than his Homer —that it is on the whole less popular, may be ascribed to the difference of fame in the poems themselves—for all who are intimately acquainted with the subjects will feel that he has come nearer to the illustrious Italian than to the unrivalled Greek.

Of the designs of the *Divina Commedia*, (which were charged one guinea a-piece,) thirty-eight are from the Hell, thirty-eight from the Purgatory, and thirty-three from the Paradise.

Those for the *Inferno* are perhaps the worthiest of Flaxman's fame. The story of Paulo and Fransesca, characters familiar to the poet, furnishes the only soft and moving representations, viz., the lovers surprised and the lovers punished; all the other thirty-six belong to the stern and the terrible. Some of these, though of classic extraction, have a touch of gothic wildness about them which

is far from unpleasant. Flaxman's Three Furies cannot indeed be compared with the Three Witches of Fuseli; but the vision of the Three Centaurs and the agonized flight of Cacus are creations of a high order. It is, however, in subjects of later date that he lays out his strength. The spirit of Hubert ascending from the sepulchre—the Fiery Rain which torments the Damned—the Evil Spirit carrying the Wicked into the deepest Hell—Virgil and Dante hemmed round by threatening demons at the passage of the bridge—Fiends tormenting a sinner in the Lake of Pitch—the Fiery Serpents—the Vale of Disease—and the punishment of Impostors, make in all eight scenes, of terrific moral grandeur. The most remarkable is a procession of Hypocrites—there they march two and two, bent forward as mourners following a corpse, and completely cloaked up and hooded in from observation. They are doomed to march on in an eternal round, and every step they take is over the cross-bound Saviour! There are gigantic figures too, and not of the happiest, especially an attempt to pourtray Lucifer himself, which looks more like one of the maddest of the mad imaginations of Blake than the conception of the classic Flaxman. A huge and hideous head—savage eyes gleaming like live coals—teeth like the prongs of a portcullis—two coarse-clawed hands clutching a poor damned mortal like a frog, and presenting the sprawling offering to a tremendous mouth, cannot be called invention.

Between the Inferno and the Purgatorio, Flaxman has inserted one of his own splendid allegoric visions—over the earth, consuming and rolling to-

gether like a scroll, appear Faith, Hope, and Charity, supported by guardian angels—then follows the spirit appearing to the two poets on the mountain of Probation. There is a sort of melancholy grandeur in this series of compositions, which belongs to beings neither wholly damned nor yet entirely blessed. The strong occasional burstings out of the personal affections of the poet, on meeting the departed worthies of Italy, have also found their way into these designs, and increases their interest much. First, there is the song of Casella, who charmed Dante with his strain of heavenly love—second, Bonaconti delivered by an angel of light from one of darkness—third, the meeting between Sordello and Virgil, when they embrace—fourth, the conversation of the two poets with Renieri da Cabroli and Guido di Brettinoro—fifth, the meeting with Statius—sixth, the elevation of Forese—seventh, the repose of Virgil, Statius, and Dante—eighth, the descent of Beatrice to the Bard, and ninth, the elevation of Beatrice upon the mysterious car. But there are other designs of a monitory kind. The Mountain where spirits are detained in probation; the Vision of the slothful and negligent; the throng of Babes escaping from the jaws of Death; the Proud Ones punished; the purification from Envy; the punishment of the Selfish; the vale of Avarice; the Intemperate tantalized, and the fiery doom of the Sensual and Gross; all these are marked by the artist's happiest simplicity of manner. The group of the Slothful, the punishment of the Sensual, and the purification from Envy, merit more praise than they have yet obtained. There are

some of a severer character still, and one or two of a more imaginative order—such as the group of startled spirits at the entrance of Purgatory—Dante and Virgil guided by an angel through the gloomy gate—and the casting out of Lucifer and his host from heaven,

Those who love angelic splendours, and reposing, and almost sleeping loveliness, and who to the horrors of the bottomless pit and the pangs of purgatory, prefer hallelujahs, golden palaces, and ever-burning stars, will be glad to turn over the three-and-thirty pictures of the Paradiso. In scenes of such supreme blessedness we are gradually lulled and soothed; winged angels, heads with halos, ladies exalted into cherubs, and souls of just men made perfect, bring languor at last to gross minds such as ours, and the borders of the river of life sink into

A pleasant land of drowsy-head.

A subject such as this suited well, however, with Flaxman, who, by this time, was all but a believer in those mystic dreams of perfection which possessed the soul of Swedenborg.

He had now spent upwards of seven years in Rome — compared the colossal extravagance of Bernini with the temperate action of the antique, and leisurely and thoroughly disciplined his hand and eye in a severe school. He had availed himself too of certain facilities which the free manners of Italy afford for studying from living models, especially of female beauty*—facilities (almost un-

When one of our English ladies expressed some surprise how Pauline Buonaparte *could* sit *so* naked for her statue to

known here) which have to this hour sustained the fame of the Italian school for truth and gracefulness of outline. Having been elected a member of the academies of Florence and Carrara, Flaxman prepared to return home. The "Child of Destiny" had already struck on the Roman side of the Alps one or two of those terrible strokes which perplexed monarchs, and the sculptor perceived the propriety of turning his face homewards. "I remember a night or two before my departure from Rome," he once observed to me, "that the ambassador of the French proudly showed us, at an evening party, a medal of Buonaparte. 'There,' said he, 'is the hero who is to shake the monarchies of the earth, and raise the glory of the Republic.' I looked at the head and said at once, 'This citizen Buonaparte of yours is the very image of Augustus Cæsar.' 'Image of a tyrant!' exclaimed the Frenchman—'no indeed—I tell you he is another sort of a man—he is a young enthusiastic hero, and dreams of nothing but liberty and equality!'"

On his return to England, Flaxman found Banks, Bacon, and Nollekens in full employment, and nothing daunted with the ill fortune of the former in poetic sculpture, resolved to try what the spell of a new enchanter could perform. "For this," says the poet Campbell, "he had an expansion of fancy, elevation of thought, and a holy beauty of feeling. His female forms may want finished luxuriance, but they have a charm more expressive and inex-

Canova, "O, my dear Madam," said the beautiful Princess, "I had a fire in the room."

pressible, from the vestal purity of his sentiment, than finish could have given them." He leased a modest house in Buckingham-street, Fitzroy-square—erected shops and studios—arranged his models and his marbles; engaged some assistants —and made his re-appearance in England known by his monument in memory of the Earl of Mansfield. This work had been commissioned during his studies in Rome. The judge is seated, in his robes, Wisdom is on one side, Justice on the other, and behind is a recumbent youth, whom the common accounts of the monument describe as Death, but who is, nevertheless, more like an unhappy mortal on whom sentence has been passed, and by Wisdom delivered up to Justice. For this magnificent work he had £2,500.

The statue of Mansfield is calm, simple, severe, and solitary—he sits alone, "above all pomp, all passion, and all pride;" and there is that in his look which would embolden the innocent and strike terror to the guilty.

The figure of the condemned youth is certainly a fine conception—hope has forsaken him, and already in his ears is the thickening hum of the multitude, eager to see him make his final account with time. This work raised high expectations—Banks said when he saw it, "This little man cuts us all out!"

During the progress of this work one of another nature touched his fancy, a work at once original and unrivalled. I have said that Flaxman enjoyed the purest domestic happiness. He felt this, and wishing to reward it in his own way, caused a little quarto book to be made, containing some score or

so of leaves, and with pen and pencil proceeded to fill and embellish it. On the first page is drawn a dove, with an olive branch in her mouth—an angel is on the right and an angel on the left, and between is written "To Ann Flaxman;" below two hands are clasped as at the altar, two cherubs bear a garland, and the following inscription to his wife introduces the subject:—"The anniversary of your birth-day calls on me to be grateful for fourteen happy years passed in your society. Accept the tribute of these sketches, which, under the allegory of a knight errant's adventures, indicate the trials of virtue and the conquest of vice, preparatory to a happier state of existence. After the hero is called to the spiritual world and blest with a celestial union, he is armed with power for the exercise of his ministry, and for fulfilling the dispensations of Providence—he becomes the associate of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and, as universal Benevolence, is employed in acts of mercy—John Flaxman, October 2, 1796." The designs which tell this noble story amount to forty—they are two and two on the pages, with descriptions in a species of measured prose, extending from two lines to a dozen, by which the coherence of the narrative—if a succession of pencilled scenes may be so called—is very clearly maintained. The figures are necessarily small, and partake more of the varied magnificence of painting than of the serenity of sculpture. The chief adventurer is the Knight of the Burning Cross, a Christian hero, whose fortitude, faith, and courage, make him, though at first sore assailed and almost vanquished, the conqueror in the end. There is much poetic dignity

in the conception of this *poem*, (for such I must call it,) and as much in the handling; nor do I know of any thing in the whole compass of our works of genius with which it can be more aptly compared than the Faery Queen.

The book commences with the Knight setting out on his expedition. He has a serious and lofty look, is young and vigorous, and fit for a career of peril.* Underneath is written

> " In gallant train the noble knight goes forth,
> Armed in the cause of God and injured virtue."

The man who rides forth in this world to aid insulted virtue and repress the insolence of vice, need never want adventures—accordingly he of the Burning Cross finds a serious one in the first day of his pilgrimage. A castle appears before him with high battlements and a difficult gate, where dwells an oppressor who injures the widow, robs the orphan, and holds virgins captive. An aërial band lead him on; he dismounts, draws his sword, enters, and guided by the groans and cries of imprisoned victims, achieves their rescue in spite of evil spirits who interpose to prevent virtuous actions. He descends into the deepest cells and

No doubt the artist, as he pencilled this opening scene, thought on the picturesque beginning of Spenser.

> " A gentle knight was pricking on the plain,
> Y-clad in mighty arms and silver shield,
> Wherein old dints of deep wounds did remain,
> The cruel marks of many a bloody field—
> Yet arms, till that time, did he never wield.
> His angry steed did chide his foaming bit,
> As much disdaining to the curb to yield.
> Full jolly knight he seemed, and fair did sit,
> As one for knightly jousts and fierce encounters fit."

bears the woe-worn and the emaciated into light and liberty. The rescued captives crowd round him, and cry "God bless and speed you, Sir Knight!" He then proceeds on his way. Seven or eight sketches embody the chief scenes of his first day's journey; they are various in merit as they are in subject, but all touched with much natural innocence and beauty. The good spirits cheering him on his way—the evil spirits vanishing at his approach, and the released captives kneeling round him, would form noble pictures were they expanded to the size of life.

The next series of sketches, in number eight, embody a succession of adventures of a still more varied and moving kind. The hero seems to have been somewhat puffed up by success. We find him asleep on the ground, with his horse grazing near, and an angel standing in the morning sun. He is awakened by the light, and arising sees a false knight bearing away a fair damsel on his saddle bow—she waves her hands—her locks are loose, and we imagine the woods through which she is borne echoing with her cries. Our true knight mounts, pursues, overtakes, vanquishes—and rescues the lady, who proves to be a perfect beauty, and one also of a tender heart. At one glance she sees that her ravisher is discomfited, and that the victor is young and comely; she supposes, as heroines are in the habit of doing, that she cannot well be too thankful, and grows very condescending. This dangerous creature, as the narrative proceeds, is joined by another as lovely and as kindly as herself; they unite their various

arts of blandishment, and our adventurer begins to divide between them—

> " The merry glance
> Which seldom lady's heart resists."

The temptation strengthens and the knight falls—not metaphorically, but truly—he is precipitated from the upper regions of purity into the nether abyss of sensuality, and lies dead in sin, with two angels mourning over his fall. He is restored to life, but it is only to behold terrific shapes, from the sight of which he recoils—a voice whispers, " Dost thou fear the sight? thou only seest thy inward self—these are thine own fiery and evil passions, who dance and sport in thine imagination, till they have turned thy brain and skipwrecked thy reason." On hearing this still small voice he repents and prays: the fetters which held him down are loosed; the Burning Cross, his former beacon, appears; the evil shapes vanish; good angels come to his side and he resumes his journey. Most of these sketches are of a high imagination—there is the most graceful ease and the most pleasing simplicity. The agitation of a mortal combat, the allurements of the most delicate beauty, the terrors of the most fearful shapes, the presence of the purest angels, render them sufficiently enchanting.

Having purified himself by prayer and repentance, the Knight of the Burning Cross continues his pilgrimage. A guardian angel accompanies him on his way; he lays his sword aside, and seeks by intercession and acts of mercy to render himself acceptable to his heavenly conductor. He begins

now to feel that his wars with the world have sapped the vigour of his frame—that he is sinking in strength, and though reminded that good angels are in his path, and that God is above to comfort and support him, he grows alarmed, sees fearful shapes, and imagines that evil spirits shut up the way between him and Paradise. Nor are his fears in vain. All the hateful passions of the earth—Envy, Malice, Hatred, Cruelty, with their dark companions, come in array against him in his advancing age; nor is Hell itself backward—demons are let loose to work all permitted mischief. He makes one effort and conquers them all, and in the company of ministering angels, sees Death shake his fatal dart, yet feels no fear—sees Hell afar off gaping to devour him, yet faints not—and smiles on the evil spirits that come crowding to annoy one whom they cannot vanquish. He then passes in peace from a world of grossness into a world of spirits. The eight designs which gather this description into as many points of view, present the fruits of an inexhaustible fancy, to which all shapes and accredited states of existence are visible and familiar. His angels are of varied beauty, nor are all his fiends of one hue or one cast of countenance;—the singular freedom of their positions—their flights in the air—their feats in liquid fire, and their movements on the earth, are all accomplished with an ease and a grace such as few artists have equalled.

A freed, a purified, but not yet an elected spirit the Knight of the Burning Cross proceeds on his way to the realms of bliss—he has angels on either

side to guard him, and is called upon to follow shapes of blessed ones to immortal happiness. He goes humbly holding down his head—the gates of bliss open as he approaches, holy spirits come forth with welcome—he seems nigh fainting at the threshold, and is supported into the regions of Paradise.

> " And now be happy in the fair possession
> Of whatsoever of loveliness and virtue
> Can give eternal bliss."

As these words are uttered, Heavenly Love, supported by four little children, appears before him, and he is now one of the Chosen. In this portion of the work there are grand groups of angels and purified spirits; but on the way from earth to heaven there is nothing to be achieved—no opposition to be foiled nor danger avoided—in truth he is a spirit elect and therefore not assailable. There is a visible want of energy in this stage of the allegory.

The second period of the Knight's existence now commences—he is commissioned of heaven to go down a guardian spirit to earth.

> " The loosened winds round him contend in vain,
> And he hath power o'er seas and mountains huge,
> O'er clouds with lightning pregnant, and with rains;
> In fire, as in a chariot doth he ride,
> And tempests own his voice."

He has softer duties also. He charms with his voice or his looks the nymphs of the sea—he purifies the earth with rain after blood shed in battle—

he cleanses the fountains and the rills, and the presiding spirits of the streams listen to his voice.

"The gentle naiads of the rills and springs
Obey thy bidding, and at thy command
They leave their dwellings, bright with chrystal dews,
And upwards shooting, scatter clouds and mists,
Or pouring freely out their watery treasure,
Work to thy blessed will."

With something of the power poetically ascribed to the good spirits of old, our immortal warrior watches over households and provinces—defends the inheritance of the widow and the orphan from a devouring dragon—conquers the hungry lion of the desert in the act of springing from his den upon a wearied traveller, commissioned to preach the Gospel in far lands—contends successfully with the powers of darkness and spreads spiritual light around—protects the innocent from the unjust accuser—and, invisible himself, makes the land sensible that the goodness of God is great. The sketches which embody all this have more in them of heaven than of earth, and they will doubtless be accused by the unimaginative as shadowy and speculative. But even in the sight of such literal-minded persons there will be found enough of the ballast of this gross world. In household or domestic things, Flaxman shone unrivalled—his virgins are all innocence and beauty, and his wives are patterns of maternal grace.

It was the object of Flaxman to exhibit the Knight of the Burning Cross fulfilling all the duties which our Saviour enjoined, and it must be acknowledged that he has performed this important task.

Our spiritual warrior proceeds to the last portion of his work on earth. He goes to war with superstition and ignorance—enters the humblest cottages to instruct its inhabitants in things heavenly; and penetrates into the most savage lands to prepare the untaught mind for the resistance of evil. He feeds the hungry—clothes the naked, and accompanied by Faith, Hope, and Charity, soothes the afflicted—enters the house of mourning—opens the prison door of the captive, and points the way to happiness and heaven. The action is subdued, and all is quiet beauty and placid holiness. The artist has in many of his monuments availed himself of the groups and sentiments of this grand moral poem. He was a devout believer in spiritual agency; and, throughout the numerous scenes of the Knight of the Burning Cross, good and evil angels are every where busy amongst the sons and daughters of man. The allegory is clear and consistent—there is nothing mean or vulgar, all is handled with the most happy delicacy. There is nevertheless a monotony which a little patient labour would have removed; but the artist, though he was pleased with his performance, seemed reluctant to retouch it, and when pressed to engrave and publish it, answered, "I am afraid the drawings are too slight, and the story not coherent enough for the fastidiousness of criticism." To publish an engraved fac-simile of this book would be conferring a benefit on mankind.

The Royal Academy began now to think that the man who had failed to obtain their medal, and whom their late president had declared to be ruined by wedlock, might, nevertheless, do

them some little honour were he amongst them. It required some degree of entreaty, I have heard, to induce Flaxman to put his name in the candidates' list for Associates, and his instant election was a proof how pleased they were that he had forgiven what cannot but be considered as ungentle treatment. This was in 1797, and in the same year he sent to the Exhibition three sketches in bas-relief from the New Testament, along with the monument of Sir William Jones. The sketches were from those designs which he had made, or contemplated to make, from the Scriptures, and were distinguished for their elegance of grouping, and the clear language which they spoke. One was Christ raising from the dead the daughter of Jarius; the figures are fourth-part the size of life, and the relief is little—but for perfect innocence and serene loveliness, I know nothing to compare to it. He afterwards expanded it into double dimensions, and carved it in marble for a monument. The second was little, if anything, inferior, and embodied the words; "Comfort and help the weak-hearted." Human sorrow is consoled by spiritual agency—by ministering angels. The third is "Feeding the Hungry;" a homely subject, poetically treated. The monument to Sir William Jones stands in the chapel of University College, Oxford; it is a bas-relief, and represents the accomplished judge engaged with some venerable bramins in a digest of the Hindoo code. Flaxman was far from excelling in works of this kind; he seldom had the art of giving grace or beauty to modern dresses, or to modern looks.

In the forty-fifth year of his age, Flaxman was

made a member of the Royal Academy. The laws of that body require every new brother to prove himself worthy by presenting to their collection some work of art from his own hands. This serves a double purpose; it aids in forming a gallery of pictures and statues, and it humbly reminds the incipient R.A. that his craft was once confounded with that of tailors; who, before they can be admitted to the honours of the corporation, are obliged to shape and stitch a certain garment, and lay it before the elders of the trade. The work with which Flaxman vindicated the right of the illustrator of Homer, Æschylus, and Dante, to sit by thirty-nine gentlemen, of whom two-thirds are now forgotten for ever, was a marble group of Apollo and Marpessa; the conception is fine—in the mechanical use of the chisel he never excelled.

The mind of Flaxman teemed with magnificent projects; not those airy schemes which arise in the minds of men who want genius to define their conceptions, and skill to carry them into execution, and whose plans lie in their own crude fancies, like creation in the obscurity of chaos. He desired to be employed on some national work, and proposed, when the subject of the grand Naval Pillar was agitated, to make a statue of Britannia, two hundred feet high, and place it on Greenwich Hill. That he could execute whatever he conceived, no one doubted; but, in order to show the world that he had not taken up the subject hastily, he published "A letter to the Committee for raising the Naval Pillar or Monument, under the patronage of the Duke of Gloucester,"

and followed it up by making "a Sketch for a colossal statue of Britannia Triumphant." To illustrate the national importance of such a work, he was ready with instances, ancient and modern: but works which offer no immediate gain are too apt, in this country, to be looked upon as the splendid dreams of a visionary. "It may be all very fine, but what does it mean?" was the general exclamation with which the magnificent proposal of Flaxman was met: the committee deliberated and dined, as committees do, and then let the matter drop; an occurrence which grieved the meek spirit of the sculptor. He had, in imagination, seen this mighty statue rising in the dignity of form and sentiment, as a landmark "conspicuous far and wide;" and he considered the coldness with which the subject was regarded as a fatal symptom. There was no bitterness in his regrets; he was too proud for that: nor yet was he angry—perhaps, he was never seriously in anger in his life; but he grieved deeply, and far more over the deficiency of public feeling than for his own disappointment. Some captious critic of the day said, "Flaxman is not contented with cutting marble into men; he wishes to hew Greenwich Hill into a woman large enough to graze a couple of goats in her lap—a gigantic dame, of whom we may say with Virgil:

> Like Ethos, or like Athos, great she shows,
> Or father Appenine, when white with snows;
> Her head divine, obscure in clouds she hides,
> And shakes the sounding forests on her sides.'"

The sculptor only smiled at this, nor was it other-

wise when another of the wasps of the hour buzzed out with "There is to be a show at Greenwich of *little* Flaxman and *big* Britannia."

The fame of Flaxman was too surely established to be shaken, either by the rejection of his colossal Britannia, or by the impertinence of professional jesters; a quick succession of noble works from his hand had made many feel that a sculptor had at length appeared to vindicate the dignity of our national genius. One of these was a monument in memory of the family of Sir Francis Baring, for Micheldean Church, Hants—a work for which it would be difficult to find an equal. It embodies these words, "Thy will be done—thy kingdom come—deliver us from evil." To the first motto belongs a devotional figure as large as life—

Her looks commercing with the skies—

a perfect image of piety and resignation. On one side embodying "Thy kingdom come," a mother and daughter ascend to the skies welcomed rather than supported by angels;—and on the other expressing the sentiment, "Deliver us from evil," a male figure in subdued agony appears in the air, while spirits of good and evil contend for the mastery. This is one of the finest pieces of motionless poetry in the land. Most truly did Flaxman say that "the Christian religion presents personages and subjects no less favourable to painting and sculpture than the ancient classics." But alas! to an ordinary mind those very passages which he has so exquisitely illustrated suggest no images either of loveliness or of terror.

Other works of nearly equal beauty, though not

of such extent, followed this splendid monument. "Blessed are they that mourn," was the text which inspired that fine production the Mother Mourning for her Daughter, comforted by a ministering angel—in memory of Mary Lushington, of Lewisham, in Kent. The same feeling was at work in his groups of "Come thou blessed," and "Lead us not into temptation;" and the whole was crowned by his celebrated "Charity," in which all the abstract coldness of allegory gives way and glows with benevolence and motherly affection. This description applies also to the monument of the Countess Spencer, which contains the figures of Faith and Charity—beautiful in form and just in sentiment. The monument of Mrs. Tighe, the poetess, has much of the same character of beauty: and that to the Yarborough family at Street Thorpe, near York, represents two ladies relieving the distressed; the artist thought this monument, and that to Edward Balme, which represents an aged man instructing a youthful pair, two of his most effective compositions. The most singular work which he executed at this time was that monument containing a figure of the Rev. Mr. Clowes, of St. John's Church, Manchester, instructing in religious duties Age, Maturity, and Childhood—it was erected during the lifetime of that exemplary man, and made a strong impression on his people.

Of historical monuments Flaxman executed several—but they are not his ablest works. He shunned, indeed, that literal representation of the subject which he ridiculed, not unhappily, in the national works of the Romans, when he called them

paragraphs of military gazettes; but he had a serious leaning towards allegory, and dealt largely in British Lions, Victorys and Britannias. Much of his poetic invention forsook him when he approached subjects of modern days. Victory hang a medallion of Captain Millar on a palm by two enormous lions—Britannia and Victory hang a medallion of Captain Millar on a palm tree—Victory raises a trophy to Captains Walker and Beckett—History writes in letters of gold the actions of Earl Howe, while Britannia and her lion are at the Admiral's feet—and finally Britannia directs the attention of two young seamen to the hero of the Nile and Trafalgar, who is dressed in the pelisse which he received from the Grand Signior. Surely the merits of these works must lie elsewhere than in the invention—the ideas of preceding artists are adopted without remorse—and are considered as the common stock in trade of the profession. Though some of the accessaries are not without merit, and some of the figures are full of graceful simplicity, the cold abstract personification triumphs over all. In these works that want of polish, which with those who look to surface forms a serious drawback on the merits of Flaxman, is visible enough; but there is a more injurious defect still—an occasional absence of true proportion, which no emendation can remedy. The statue of Howe was so heavy and disproportioned that the sculptor consumed months after its erection in chiseling it down; nor has all his skill prevailed. How this occurred forms an instructive chapter in the history of sculpture.

It was the practice of this eminent artist to

work his marbles from half-sized models—a system injurious to true proportion. The defects of the small model were aggravated, at the rate of eight to one, in the full-sized marble: and such is the nature of the material, that no labour, however judicious, can effectually repair so grievous an error. It is true, that one with an eye so correct, and a taste so well determined, was unlikely to make great mistakes; but all those acquainted with working in marble know, that the removal of one defect is often the means of discovering two, and that any change is like cutting a tooth out of a nicely balanced wheel. By working in that way, indeed, time is supposed to be saved, also some expense—and chiefly the difficulty is eluded of raising up a large structure of wet clay, and preserving it in just proportion till modelled and cast in plaster. But little labour and little thought go to construct a skeleton of wood, in the shape of the figure to be made, round which the modelling clay is wrought—a constant practice with those who feel it to be wiser to work in a soft and pliable material, than commit themselves with small models in the difficulties of marble. By means of this skeleton of wood the naked figure is raised; and farther frame work is constructed to support hanging draperies. Wire and bits of wood will suspend arms or folds: while the whole skeleton is kept in its position by an upright piece of timber, resembling the mast of a ship, which rises out of the centre of the turning-banker on which the statue is modelled.

When the skeleton is ready, and the modelling-clay nicely beat up till it is pliable as the softest

dough, the artist places the sketch which he means to copy before him, and cutting the square lumps of clay into long thin slices, works it round the frame-work and beats it solidly in, so as to leave no crevices in which water may lodge and endanger his labour. The clay wrought with tools of wood, and with the hand, gradually grows into the desired form: the artist turns the figure round and round—proves it in strong and in weak lights—compares it with living and also dead models; and when he conceives it to be true in proportion, and expressing the wished-for sentiment, proceeds to clothe or drape it. All statues are modelled naked and then clothed; this insures accuracy of proportion and gracefulness of shape, without which no drapery will hang with elegance, and fine workmanship is thrown away. To obtain a natural and flowing drapery, a cloak or robe of the same texture of that to be represented is put upon the lay figure—the figure itself fixed in the proper position, and the robe adjusted till it falls in the desired manner: the general idea of the drapery—the chief leading lines—are already determined, and from the robe the detail is copied. In these great essentials—proper conception of sentiment, posture, and drapery—Flaxman was a master. When the model is completed, a mould in plaster of Paris is then made over the figure; and all the clay and frame-work are removed. The mould being made in two parts is readily washed and placed together; the cast is then formed of a finer plaster than the mould, and irons are put up the centre to support it. With a wooden mallet and a blunt chisel formed like a

wedge, the artist removes the outer mould, which peels readily off; when the plaster statue is entirely cleaned down, it is then fit to be dried in a hot stove, and copied into marble.

Had Flaxman made his models full size, he would have been no loser of time—and certainly in fame, of which he was justly more careful, he would have been a gainer. The process of rough-hewing the marble from a full-sized model, is quick and easy and safe, compared to using the lesser size; and in carving the artist sees his way far better, where every fold, however minute, is clearly made out and defined. The simplicity and accuracy of the new pointing instrument furthers labour greatly, and transfers the minutest part of the original plaster model with mathematical precision to marble. Flaxman latterly became sensible of the advantage of large models—his Archangel Michael overcoming Satan was made in that manner, and so were several of his lesser works.

When the peace of Amiens opened the way to France, Flaxman visited Paris, and, along with multitudes of his countrymen, went wandering through the splendid collections of painting and sculpture gathered together — it was fondly thought for centuries—in the Louvre. Napoleon in those days had hardly begun to abuse his good fortune; and was still regarded by many as the morning star of the renovated destinies of mankind. But the splendid qualities of the First Consul failed to dazzle the strong English good sense of Flaxman—it was enough for him that Napoleon, gloss it as he might, was the settled

and deliberate enemy of his native land—he returned his civilities with stately courtesy, and refused to be introduced to him. It was with a dislike, approaching to loathing, that he repulsed the proffered civilities of David, the painter, who, with hands dyed beyond all purification in the atrocities of the Jacobin Club, presented himself to the sculptor. The merciful and tender-hearted Englishmen looked on him with double disgust—first as an artist who had filled his portfolio with sketches made during the dying agonies of those whom he had aided in condemning; and secondly, as an atheist, who shared in the unimaginative insanities of those who sought to place a contemptible philosophy on the altar of the True God. This has appeared in the sight of some as over-sensitiveness; but then our sculptor, unlike the dye-ends of the book he loved to read, thought that an acquiescence of the exterior deportment was little better than hypocrisy—and, moreover, that it was unsafe, or at least unwise, to keep company with persons, however clever or brilliant, whose moral and religious opinions were inimical to the natural law of mercy and loving-kindness, and to the religion revealed by heaven. "By this conduct," says one who knew him well, "he preserved a purity of heart and character rarely to be met with—it was this purity of heart which inspired that delightful cheerfulness and amenity of manner that won the affection of the young and gay, as well as the respect and friendship of those of equal years: the more intimately he was known, the more he was beloved." He returned from France with a confirmed opinion,

that the physiognomy of Buonaparte corresponded with that of Augustus, and that ere long he would play openly the part of a tyrant.

No place can be imagined more alien to the spirit and feelings of Flaxman than Paris, at the period of his visit—he was a pure and a pious man, who, though there was austerity in his nature abhorred impiety. In fact, though a member of the Established Church, he had long turned aside to drink at another fountain—or, in the words of the world, he had listened to the doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg, and was become all but a proselyte. It is true, as one of his biographers remarks, that though he adopted most of the peculiar doctrines of the sect, he did not publicly associate with the congregation, but continued with the Established Church; he nevertheless coloured his conversation and his way of life somewhat with the mysticism of that pleasing visionary. The limit to which he confined his belief has not been laid down; indeed a man of his sense could not well fly the wild flight of a sect — thus described by the vigorous pen of Crabbe:—

"Those wandering walkers on enchanted ground:
Who in our world can other worlds survey,
And speak with spirits though confined in clay;
Of Bible mysteries they the keys possess,
Assured themselves where wiser men but guess;
'Tis theirs to see around, about—above
How spirits mingle thoughts and angels move;
Those whom our grosser views from us exclude,
To them appear a heavenly multitude:
While the dark sayings sealed to men like us,
Their priests interpret and their flocks discuss."

Such devout imaginations as those of Swedenborg often occasion depression of spirits, shade the mind with a mystical melancholy, and render their victim unfit for the warfare of life. It was far otherwise with Flaxman: he was gay, cheerful and companionable; he was none of those, (and they are not few) who take their mirth abroad and reserve moroseness for home. He would often cheer the winter evening by composing light and amusing things for the entertainment of his family or his friends—ingenious little stories in prose or verse, illustrated with sketches, serious and burlesque. Much of the peculiar talent of the man found its way into these unstudied trifles; in his hand the merriest legend failed not to put on a moral aim and a classic grace. It is pleasing to follow to the fireside and the supper table the mind which brooded so successfully over the severe sublimities of Homer and Dante, and to see and hear him disporting amid quaint conceits and agreeable absurdities. It is true that he set no value on these hasty things, and that he generally destroyed them: one however, by name "The Casket," survives, and a curious composition it is.

The story of the Casket is this:—One day, in the winter of 1812, Flaxman, who shared with Banks in the love of oriental productions, saw and bought a small Chinese casket, of very rich workmanship, and gave it to his wife and sister. It was one of those neat trifles in which ladies delight to stow away their trinkets and laces; so they set it before them on the table, and while the sculptor was sketching, the two sisters began to talk about the present. "This is a pretty thing," said one,

"and not made yesterday either: its history must be curious." "Curious, no doubt," said the other, "we can easily make a history for it. What is it without its genealogy?—was it not made in the reign of the illustrious Ching-Fu, by one of the Muses of China, to hold the golden maxims of Confucius?" "And obtained in barter,' continued the other, "for glass beads and two-penny knives, by one of those wandering genii called in Britain trading captains?" Flaxman smiled at this history, and forthwith set to work with pen and pencil.

The designs for the Casket are ten in number, and the lines which accompany them amount to some hundreds. The rhyme commences with the praise of the ancient philosophic sovereigns of China, during whose reign poetry, pagodas, green dragons, parasols, and little shoes, came into fashion, and who, moreover, taught their happy subjects

> "..... the various arts of life,
> To build, keep house, and live as man and wife;
> Prepare green tea, make wooden gods, cook rice,
> Pickle nice tadpoles, and eat rats and mice."

During this period of national peace and domestic happiness, art prospered in China. Now it happened that one of the three daughters of the reigning prince, Tien, was reposing amid the flowers of her father's garden, when she heard the song of a nightingale, and, being learned in the language of birds, discovered that the burthen of the ditty related to a certain splendid casket in the bowers of Paradise. Away goes Lo-een (such was the name

of this eastern princess) to her sisters, Ping-see and Sing-see, and sitting down on the ground beside them,

"Alternate took each sister's hand, and prest
With ardour to her own fair fragrant breast."

Words at length come; she relates what she has learned from the wondrous nightingale; and knowing the almost magic skill of her sisters in works of beauty, urges a request:—

"'Sisters, in wondrous arts you both excel,
Hard to conceive, more difficult to tell,—
Make me a Casket; grace it with your art:
In it fair science shall her laws impart;
In it shall virtue's moral law be given,
Sent down to man, the last best gift of heaven.'"

In the sketch which precedes these lines and forms the frontispiece, the casket is watched by genii, and guarded by two tremendous personages, the Gog and Magog of China. The princess, in the second sketch, sits among flowers listening to the nightingale, which, like the bird of Burns,

"Proud of the height of some bit half lang tree,"

pours out its ditty; and in the third design she urges her sisters to the undertaking. The two princesses proceed to work, and with scented wood, gems, pearls, and perfumed paints, perform their task, and present themselves before Lo-een, who looks with delight on the wondrous casket, and resolves to place in it, as in a sanctuary, the noblest maxims and divinest verses of the poets and philosophers of the Celestial Empire. All this is known to Psi-whong, a famous

sorcerer, who, fearful that poetry and morality will thus be enabled to prevail against the darkness of his own art, presents himself before the three princesses, and offers to fill the casket with the most splendid spells and magic verses, which should bring nothing but joy and gladness to man. In order, too, to enforce his arguments he comes conveyed on winged tigers through the air, and assumes a look at once fearful and threatening. The damsels listen in anger to the insidious offer of the enchanter; they refuse to have the casket polluted with "the black art;" they command him, in the name of purity and truth, to be gone; and then hurl him down headlong, amid the hissing of serpents and

> "A blue sulphureous flame, whose noisome fume
> Poisoned the wholesome air, and spread a dolorous gloom."

The fourth sketch shows his rapid descent. The beauty of the three incensed virgins and the precipitate descent of the baffled sorcerer form a fine picture.

Conceiving that their treasure is no longer safe in China, thus exposed to the malice of magicians, the princesses carry it to Mount Hermon, and depositing it on the "high and holy hill, as in a safe and sacred place, leave it in the keeping of genii.

> "Then Persian Sadi's noble mind was fired
> By wisdom's charms and virtue's love inspired,
> To give the world again the golden age,
> By hallowed precept and example sage;
> On him the beauteous casket they bestowed."

The sixth sketch exhibits Sadi seated on the

ground, writing his virtuous verses and maxims for the casket, whilst a winged angel, with a wand of power, keeps watch. The poet dies; and the treasure falls into other hands.

"By Hafiz next the casket was possest,
With quickest fancy, brightest genius blest;
His looks beamed rapture, all his movements grace,
Beauteous his form, enchanting was his face."

The seventh design represents Hafiz composing verses for the casket. At first it seems his strains were pure and virtuous; but freer thoughts arose in his mind, loose visions floated before his sight, and obeying these, the treasure, on which he had for a moment turned his back that he might gaze on the charms of two very lively ladies, is

"By indignant angels snatched away,"

and the eastern poet is left in despair.

The angelic keepers, many in number and "beautiful exceedingly," float through the inland vales with the casket, resolved to bear it to a certain Isle, where virtuous songs, virtuous works of art, and virtuous people abound. The eighth sketch shows this scene; and it is handled with great elegance and delicacy.

"Lo! golden helms and spears light the blue air,
And cherub faces, so divinely fair:
Their locks ambrosial float upon the gale,
Their pure white robes along the breezes sail.
The Muses raise their voice in choral song,
Salute the pageant as it moves along."

Over upturned faces, waving locks, and floating robes, the object of all this solicitude is seen about

to be consigned to other hands. Maritime spirits receive the casket, and with many a shout and song put at once to sea. The ninth sketch shows the embarkation :—

> "Sea-maids and Tritons form the laughing train
> Which bears the casket o'er the boundless main."

The Colossus of Rhodes bows its brazen head as they go singing by; the ancient Gods of Greece clap their hands in approbation; the fleets of other nations open and let them through; and soon

> "The godlike Genius of the British Isle
> Receives the casket with benignant smile."

And with this scene the story ends. The verses are often unmusical, and the sketches are all slight, but it is, on the whole, a pleasing effort of fancy.

These were but the sports of his genius—productions of deep thought and severe labour belong to the same period. His statues of an historical nature have been justly admired for the fine sentiment which lives through head and limb; they have likewise been censured for a sort of coarse and heavy execution, which robs them, in the eyes of those who see but skin deep, of half their value. In these the half-size-model system is very visible. The statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds is one of his first and best. The painter holds his Discourses on Art in his right hand, and the tip of the fingers of his left reach the top of a pedestal or altar, on the side of which is a portrait of the saint he professed to worship—Michael Angelo. There is so much tranquil dignity in the look, that one may forget something of ungraceful execution about

the knees. The colossal statue of Sir John Moore, in bronze, for Glasgow, is scarcely of that heroic character which the subject required—the figure is heavy and inert, and the calm resolution which it was the sculptor's ambition to express, has partly escaped in the multifarious processes of modelling, moulding, casting, and chasing. The statue of Pitt, in the Town Hall of the same city, exhibits the costume which Flaxman abhorred; and both man and dress are too real and literal to excite that loftiness of feeling which is, or ought to be, the grand aim of noble works of art. Here is a specimen of the school of Tailor-sculpture—the capes, cuffs, seams, buttons, and button-holes, are all in the way of dignity; indeed, it is a difficult matter to treat them tastefully. The figure of Joseph Warton instructing three boys, and that of George Stevens contemplating a bust of Shakspeare, though not aspiring to the dignity of statues, are yet superior to some I have named—they, at least, indicate the characters and pursuits of the individuals.

But the works he loved most were those which embodied poetical passages in the Bible, and with such was he ever ready to commemorate the dead. The churches threw their doors readily open to admit works which formed comments on Scripture: and so much was he disposed at all times to devout feelings, that he would all but give away his finest designs rather than lose such an opportunity. This was not the way to grow rich; yet in this way he spread himself abroad, and India, Italy, Scotland, Ireland, and the West Indies, can boast of statues and groups from his hand. Even the distant kingdom of Tanjore acknowledged his genius—he

made a statue of the Rajah himself, and a monument to the Missionary Schwartz; both of which are now in the East, and have been noticed in the precious Journals of Bishop Heber. He also made two monuments in memory of Lord Cornwallis, a figure of Warren Hastings, and a statue of the Marquis Hastings. Of the courtesy and generosity of the East India Company, Flaxman loved to speak. "They have ever behaved to me," he said, "in a way at once graceful and liberal, and in every thing worthy of a Company who have acquired a splendid territory with less violence than any dominions were ever won, and who maintain them with more wisdom than history has recorded of any ancient or modern people."

He was now to appear in a new character. In the year 1810, the Royal Academy, after some thought, and not without opposition, created a Professorship of Sculpture, and bestowed it upon Flaxman. A small premium was offered for six annual lectures, and as money was never his object, he proceeded to fulfil the duty of his office with enthusiasm and knowledge. To his first lecture, delivered in 1811, flocked academicians, students, and connoisseurs: and as he took his seat there was loud applause. His works, and the reputation he had acquired for learning and research, bespoke respectful attention; while his singular gravity of manner, simplicity of appearance, and a voice which, though not very musical, had a winning mildness of tone, added to the favourable impression. From the jest of Fuseli it appears that *his* expectation was little—he recollected himself at a dinner party, and starting up,

said, "Farewell friends—farewell wine—farewell wit—I must leave you all, and hear sermon the first preached by the Reverend John Flaxman." Nor can it be denied that the singular sedateness of his manners, and the calm and unimpassioned tone in which he described the classical sculptures of antiquity, countenanced the joke of his fellow professor, and contributed to disappoint those who expected great eloquence or something rapt and poetical, and who forgot that the proper aim of one placed in such a chair is to instruct rather than to excite.

These lectures are ten in number, and the subjects are, 1. English Sculpture; 2. Egyptian Sculpture; 3. Grecian Sculpture; 4. Science; 5. Beauty; 6. Composition; 7. Style; 8. Drapery; 9. Ancient Art; 10. Modern Art. As literary compositions containing a clear and commanding view of sculpture, ancient and modern—abundant in just sentiments and wise remarks—and such professional precepts as only experience can supply, they merit more regard than they have as yet received. The style is a little heavy—the unsolicited happinesses of expression are few; the illustrations supplied by poetry are somewhat common-place, and the dry catalogue of statues and groups, lost in the vicissitudes of nations, is, I confess, oppressive: but the account of the Gothic sculpture in England is as rich as a chapter of old romance, and infinitely more interesting; while the Lectures on Beauty and Composition ought to be familiar to the mind of every student. The order of their arrangement is natural, and there is good sense and a feeling

for all that is noble and heroic scattered over every page: but we miss the glowing and picturesque language which arouses the sluggish, and the unimpassioned counsels of the great sculptor fell upon the students of the Academy like a shower of snow. But, in truth, they who frequent the lectures of our professors, are in general a quiet and orderly generation, who listen with little emotion to the most glowing harangues. They never forgot themselves, save once, when they chaired and cheered Proctor, on his gaining the gold medal—"Hearken," exclaimed Barry, "the boys have caught the old Greek spirit."

A few passages from these lectures will relieve the monotony of narrative. Of beauty he says, "that it is not merely an imaginary quality, but a real essence, may be inferred from the harmony of the universe, and the perfection of its wondrous parts we may understand from all surrounding nature: and in this course of observation we find that man has more of beauty bestowed upon him as he rises higher in creation. By the wisdom man is endowed with, all creatures are subjected to his dominion: by his affections he is enabled to perform all the charities of life—to prefer the interests of others to his own—to distinguish personal beauty as the indication of a good disposition and health, and to trace his Creator in his work, and offer the homage of his worship. As the affections of man stimulate and engage him in every act, so his understanding directs the means, and looks to the end in every employment through life. These modify the exterior of the face and figure according to constant habit or momentary impulse.

The passionate are known by quick fiery glances, swollen brows, dilated nostrils, the mouth a little open, the movements of the whole figure sudden, the muscles of the body being disposed to rigidity or contraction. The melancholy have a general dejection of look, the exterior corners of the eyes and eye-brows tending downwards, a universal slowness of motion and disregard of outward objects. Every passion, sentiment, virtue or vice, have their corresponding signs in the face, body, and limbs, which are understood by the skilful physician and physiognomist, when not confused by the working of contrary affections, or hidden by dissimulation.

"In the formation and appearance of the body," he continues, "we shall always find that its beauty depends on its health, strength, and agility, most convenient motion and harmony of parts in the male and female human figure, according to the purposes for which they were intended: the man for greater power and exertion—the woman for tenderness and grace. If these characteristics of form are animated by a soul in which benevolence, temperance, fortitude, and the other moral virtues preside unclouded by vice, we shall recognise in such a one perfect beauty, and remember that God created man in his own image. The most perfect human beauty is, that most free from deformity either of body or mind, and may be, therefore, defined

'The most perfect soul in the most perfect body.'

Doubts can scarcely be entertained that there are principles of beauty, because various opinions

prevail in different countries on the subject. Men are in different states of mental and bodily improvement, from the most savage to the most civilized countries, and we know that many successive generations must pass in the confirmation of moral habits, and the right direction of reason and elevation of intellect, before man can judge with any tolerable ability of mental or natural beauty, their causes, relations, and effects; and that in all states of society there must be allowance for prejudice and climate. But we shall certainly find, that the wisest and best men in all ages and countries have held nearly the same notions on the subject. Homer constantly endows his gods with personal beauty, accommodated to their mental perfection and immortal power, and his heroes with the attributes of gods. Thus he gives to Jupiter the epithets of 'Counsellor' and 'Provident,' he describes his hair as 'divine'—'ambrosial,' and his nod as making the world tremble. Juno he calls the 'Ox-eyed' and the 'White-armed'—Minerva the 'Blue-eyed Virgin.' Achilles is the handsomest man who went to Troy—his epithets are, 'divine,' 'godlike,' 'swift-footed.' Agamemnon is called 'the King of Men'—Nestor and Ulysses are said to be 'in council like the gods,' all expressing the union of mental and bodily excellence. The same sentiments continued in aftertimes. In Plato's Dialogue of Phædrus concerning the Beautiful, he shows the power and influence of beauty; and in his dialogue entitled 'The Greater Hippias,' he makes Socrates observe in argument, 'that as a beautiful vase is inferior to a beautiful horse, and as a beautiful horse is not to

be compared to a beautiful virgin, in the same manner a beautiful virgin is inferior in beauty to the immortal gods.' It is remarkable that immediately after he says, Phidias is skilful in beauty. From such contemplations and maxims the ancient artists sublimated the sentiments of their works expressed in the choicest forms of nature: thus they produced their divinities, heroes, patriots, and philosophers, adhering to the principle of Plato, 'that nothing is beautiful which is not good.' "

These are fine passages and splendid authorities —yet mental beauty and personal beauty are often —too often—found apart. The poets of Greece sung, the philosophers wrote, and the sculptors carved in the spirit and meaning of their religion —it was addressed chiefly to the eye—took up its abode in magnificent temples—was visible in sacred processions and solemn sacrifices—its voice was heard in oracles, to which the wisest listened, and the forms which it assumed were the noblest which man's imagination could conceive. This was the time when the beautiful was identified with the best. In this the Heathen differed from the Christian—the former worshipped external beauty —the latter adored the mental and the divine. The wildest of all our enthusiasts never insisted on the personal beauty of the Saviour of mankind, nor on the external loveliness of his apostles. Had Phidias carved the Christian Patriarchs, he would have made them naked men of the race of Apollo. A hand not inferior painted them; and the apostles of Raphael are grave men—their master's religion is stamped on their brows, and they are covered soberly with garments. It is a

splendid theory which the sons at least, if not the daughters, of man seldom realize—that the finest face goes with the worthiest mind.

"Painting and sculpture," he observes, in his Lecture on Science, "are intimately connected with a considerable portion of the circle of knowledge: so that whether we regard them as engaged in the representation of the human figure singly, or in the variety of epic or historical composition, this remark will be equally justified. The human figure singly cannot be represented without an accurate acquaintance with its structure in the bones, muscles, tendons, veins, and nerves, together with a knowledge of the several organs which contribute their functions to the continuation of life, whether the subject is in action or at rest. This information is generally understood to be gained by the science of anatomy; but then it must be assisted by the geometrical forms of the bones, the mechanical structure and movement of the joints, the laws of extension and contraction in the muscles, with a variety of phenomena relating to the internal economy, and indicated in the exterior of the human form. The human figure cannot be represented from cursory or ignorant observation; it must be understood before it can be imitated. Therefore Greek sculpture did not rise to excellence until anatomy, geometry, and numbers had enabled the artist to determine his drawing, proportions, and motion; then, and not before, a just expression might be infused in the truth and harmony of parts, and the artist endowed his statue with life, action, and sentiment. We possess, in England, the most pre-

cious examples of Grecian power. The horses of the frieze in the Elgin collection appear to live and move, to roll their eyes, to gallop, prance, and curvet—the veins of their faces and legs seem distended with circulation; in them are distinguished the hardness and decision of bony forms, from the elasticity of tendon and the softness of flesh. The beholder is charmed with the deer-like lightness and elegance of their make, and although the relief is not above an inch from the back-ground, and they are so much smaller than nature, we can scarcely suffer reason to persuade us they are not alive."

To the heathen sculptors, who represented their gods and heroes naked, anatomical and geometrical knowledge was much more necessary than to Christian artists, who trust to mental expression and cover their figures with draperies. He who is acquainted with the general principles of anatomy, knows enough to enable him to make a statue now, for the greater delicacy of our religion demands a costume which conceals all the muscular detail on which the ancients prided themselves; and the purer taste of the world forbids those statues and groups which, in their naked loveliness and vigour, were the delight of the Greeks. The eye turns away displeased from the anatomical pedantry of many otherwise noble works of art, and longs for the simplicity of nature, sentiment, and expression. No one was more sensible of all this than Flaxman himself, when, after an eulogium on anatomy, geometry, and mechanics, he exclaimed, "Every painter and sculptor feels conviction that a considerable portion of

science is requisite to the productions of liberal art; but he will be equally convinced, that whatever is produced from principles and rules only, added to the most exquisite manual labour, is no more than a mechanical work. Sentiment is the life and soul of fine art; without, it is all a dead letter. Sentiment gives a sterling value, an irresistible charm to the rudest imagery or the most unpractised scrawl. By this quality a firm alliance is formed with the affections in all works of art. With an earnest watchfulness for their preservation, we are made to perceive and feel the most sublime and terrific subjects, following the course of sentiment through the current and mazes of intelligence and passion to the most delicate and tender ties and sympathies of affection—the benign exertions of spiritual natures; the tremendous fall of rebel angels or Titans; the immovable fortitude or contending energy of patriotism; the sincerity of friendship, and the irresistible harmony of connubial, maternal, fraternal, and filial love. Such efforts are produced by the communication of the artist's own choicest feelings and faculties, embodied and enforced by the uninterrupted and constant observation and imitation of whatever is most strikingly excellent in nature."

We miss in these Lectures some account of the Grecian mode of working in marble—a secret withheld from us by the ancients themselves; but which the experience, penetration, and learning of Flaxman might have enabled him to discover. Were those noble groups and statues produced in marble through the medium of models—or did drawings suffice—and if the former were used, by

what process was the copy made—by instruments such as we use—or by plummets and compasses—or by the unaided hand and eye? That they had moulds for casting works of art, their bronze statues sufficiently show; and that they had the choicest tools and the most skilful hands, their marbles bear lasting proof. But how they wrought out deep and difficult sinkings—gave that loose fine clustering elegance to the hair—and communicated to the surface of the marble that exquisite delicacy of finish, no one has told us. It is difficult to doubt that, with superior genius, they had all the mechanical facilities of which we boast, and probably more. The marks of chisels and the perforations of drills—our chief instruments—are visible on many of their works. It is true that Michael Angelo grappled at once with the marble block, and shaping the figure in imagination before him, hewed it boldly out, and derided those who went the round-about way of models. But this was a wild waste of time; had he modelled his statue in clay, cast it in plaster, and got it rough-hewn by some ordinary hand, he might have made three where he made but one, and at the same time avoided those mistakes in proportion of which he is accused. Upon those mysteries of workmanship Flaxman has thrown little light.—Of the Lectures in general, Campbell thus writes: "We owe duties of allowance to superior as well as to inferior minds; and it occurred to me, in judging of these Lectures, we are bound to guard ourselves against exaggerated expectations, which no great artist in teaching his art can fulfil. It is not merely that a book on Sculpture can never

move us like great achievements in Sculpture itself, but that the etherial essence of that skill by which the magician touched us in his works being untransferable to words, he must be mainly employed in communicating the plainer rules of his art, and in this didactic vocation we must not expect that he should wear the same mantle of inspiration as an author which invested him as an artist. It is fearfully difficult to be eloquent in teaching art. The floor of didactic language, constructed for the tread of sober ideas, is perilously shaken by the tramp of impassioned enthusiasm. Flaxman is all sobriety of style, and he is blamed for dryness and coldness. There is no such thing as pleasing every body; and particularly in bequests from great men, the imagination is apt to be a greedy legatee, unbounded in hope, and querulous in expectation."

The description which the poet has given—or rather the apology which he has made for the sobered-down style of the Lectures—may be extended to Flaxman's other writings. They are numerous—anonymous—yet well known; some of them are in a happier and easier spirit than his addresses to the students, and all are marked by a sense of the poetical in art and by considerable learning. He wrote a character of the works of Romney for Hayley's life of that artist, which attributes to the painter an extent of capacity not visible in his pictures—and to the Cyclopædia of Rees he contributed the articles Armour, Basso-Relievo—Beauty—Bronze—Bust—Composition—Cast—and Ceres. His acquaintance with Gothic sculpture aided him in treating of armour, and many of the notions and

much of the knowledge which brighten the other articles have found their way into his lectures. In richness of language—in fervour of expression—in learning illuminated by the brightness of natural thought he has been far surpassed; but he is excelled by none in his sense of the austere and chastened dignity of art. His fine perception was felt by all when he appeared with others of his brethren, and spoke to the character of the Elgin marbles. "With respect," said he, "to the beauty of the Basso-Relievos, they are as perfect nature as it is possible to put into the compass of the marble in which they are executed, and that of the most elegant kind. The statue called the Hercules, or Theseus, is a work of the first order—but the surface is corroded by the weather; the head is in that impaired state that I cannot give an opinion upon it, and the limbs are mutilated. I prefer to it the Apollo Belvidere, which I believe to be only a copy—it has more ideal beauty than any male statue I know." This was opposed by Sir Thomas Lawrence, who said, "The Elgin marbles are of a higher class of art than the Apollo Belvidere—there is in them an union of fine composition and very grand form, with a more true and natural expression of the effects of action upon the human frame than there is in the Apollo, or in any of the most celebrated statues."

If the offspring of Flaxman's pen was cold and sober, the progeny of his pencil and chisel were of the highest rank—there is a prodigious affluence of imagination in all his sketches and drawings; and his shops, studio, and sketch-books exhibit

them in hundreds—nay, in thousands. To name all his sketches would occupy many pages, and to describe them, at the rate of five lines to each, would be to compose a volume. Some of his illustrations of the Pilgrim's Progress equal that religious romance in simplicity, and far surpass it in loftiness; something of the same sort may be said of his designs for Sotheby's translation of Oberon —forty in number. But the work on which his fancy most delighted to expatiate was Hesiod. He loved the days of innocence and the age of gold, when philosophers went barefooted, kings held the plough, princesses washed their own linen, and poets sung, like the northern minstrel, for food and raiment. There are thirty-six illustrations, and for simplicity, loveliness, and grace, they fairly rival any of his other works. They embody the story of Pandora, and exhibit the effects of her descent to earth. One of these he thought so highly of, that he modelled it in relief — Mercury carries Pandora from heaven to earth, and moves with his charge through the air like a bird.

For thirty-eight years Flaxman had lived wedded—his health was generally good, his spirits ever equal; and his wife, to whom his fame was happiness, had been always at his side. Though inclined, as Banks, the sculptor, said, to be a little pedantic in her conversation, she was a most cheerful intelligent woman, a collector too of drawings and sketches, and an admirer of Stothard, of whose designs and prints she had amassed more than a thousand. Her husband paid her the double respect due to affection and talent, and

when any difficulty in composition occurred, he would say with a smile, "Ask Mrs. Flaxman, she is my dictionary." She maintained the simplicity and dignity of her husband, and refused all presents of paintings or drawings or books, unless some reciprocal interchange were made. It is almost needless to say that Flaxman loved such a woman very tenderly. The hour of their separation approached—she fell ill and died in the year 1820, and from the time of this bereavement something like a lethargy came over his spirit. His sister—a lady of taste and talent much like his own—and his wife's sister were of his household; but she who had shared in all his joys and sorrows was gone, and nothing could comfort him.

He was now in his sixty-sixth year, and surrounded with the applause of the world. His studios were filled with orders and commissions—one of the principal was the Archangel Michael vanquishing Satan; another was the Shield of Achilles, modelled in 1818. The former was for Lord Egremont, to whom art is largely a debtor, and the latter, which was ordered by Rundell and Bridge, the eminent silversmiths, is considered by many as one of the artist's most successful works.

"The poet's intention," says Pope, "was no less than to draw the picture of the whole world in the compass of this shield. We first see the universe in general; the heavens are spread, the stars are hung, the earth is stretched forth, the seas are poured round: we next see the world in a nearer and more particular view; the cities delightful in peace, or formidable in war; the labours of the country and the fruit of those labours in

the harvest and in the vintage; the pastoral life in its pleasures and in its dangers; in a word, all the occupations—all the ambitions, and all the diversions of mankind." In the distribution of the various scenes and probable measurement of the shield, Pope followed Monsieur Boivin, who laid the whole down to scale with mathematical precision; his love, however, of defined lines, and want of sympathy with true art, have made his memorable buckler look like a chariot-wheel, with the twelve scenes painted and hung between the spokes. There are circles to the amount of nine, or more, with numerous intersections, which injure the general harmony of the workmanship. The size was settled, and also the shape—there is sufficient evidence that the shield was circular, and if the buckler of Hector, which, in the Sixth Iliad, reaches from shoulder to ancle, be taken as a scale, that of Achilles could not be less than four feet in diameter. Flaxman has selected from Pope all that is in accordance with his art, and interpreted the rest for himself. He has lessened the diameter to three feet—dismissed one-half of the circles of Boivin, and the lines of intersection, intended by the Frenchman as divisions to the twelve scenes, are changed for faint and waving lines, which divide the groups sufficiently without offending the eye.

Round the border of the shield he first wrought the sea: in breadth about three fingers—wave follows wave in quiet undulation—he knew that a boisterous ocean would disturb the repose and harmony of the rest of the work. On the central boss he has represented Apollo, or the Sun, in his

chariot—the horses seem starting forward, and the God bursting out in beauty to give light to the universe around him. The circle of which, Apollo is the centre, is in diameter little more than a foot, yet in this space he has pictured

> The earth, the heaven, the sea,
> The sun that rests not, and the moon full-orbed.
> There also all the stars, which round about
> As with a radiant frontlet bind the skies;
> The Pleiads and the Hyads, and the might
> Of huge Orion, with him Ursa called,
> Known also by his popular name the Wain.

On the twelve celebrated scenes which fill that space in the shield between the ocean-border and the general representation of the universe, he exhausted all his learning and expended all his strength. The figures are generally about six inches high, and vary in relief from the smallest visible swell, to half an inch. There is a convexity of six inches from the plane; and the whole contains upwards of an hundred human figures. Of this magnificent work the artist was justly proud—he was paid £620 for the drawings and model—the first cast, in silver gilt, price 2000 guineas, was placed by His Majesty on his own side-board—the second, of the same material and value, was presented by the King to the Duke of York—a third, of the same metal, was made for Lord Lonsdale, and a fourth for the Duke of Northumberland. Two casts in bronze were made by the proprietors for themselves, and three in plaster were prepared, for the Royal Academy, for Sir Thomas Lawrence, and for Flaxman himself.

Some of the noblest of Flaxman's works belong to his latter days; for example, his Psyche—his Pastoral Apollo—the statues of Michael Angelo and Raphael, and the group of the Archangel Michael and Satan. In the Psyche and the Pastoral Apollo, the genius of him who illustrated Homer is sufficiently apparent—a certain austere composure is breathed over them. The Michael Angelo and the Raphael are poetic, yet real—heroic, yet familiar; and their costume, though not antique, is at once historic and picturesque. Of his statues, Burns and Kemble, made about the same time, I cannot speak so favourably—the latter personates Coriolanus, and the former stands musing with the mountain daisy in his hand. The player is a degree heavy, and the poet has a little too much of the clouted shoe in his costume. Flaxman was an admirer of Burns and a quoter of his poetry. The group of the Archangel Michael and Satan is a work of the highest merit—the conception is epic—the grouping grand, and the action godlike. The good angel is triumphantly trampling the evil one under his feet; and from the subdued agony of the latter, we may see that he has felt the heavenly spear. Artists, who hope they are historical or poetic, would do well to look at the divine composure of this group—all is elevated—there is nothing low—there is much to excite awe, and nothing to disgust. Compare this with the Prometheus of Salvator Rosa. There the victim lies on his back; the vulture tears out his liver, and splashes his quivering wings with blood—a scene of carnage, not of terror.

It was not till the year 1825, that the author of this too imperfect narrative became personally acquainted with Flaxman. He had come to the exhibition-room with a statue—on seeing me he smiled—took off his hat—bowed, and shook me heartily by the hand, saying, with a voice which I think I hear now, "Allan Cunningham, I am glad to meet you—Lady Dacre has repeated to me some of your noble ballads—come and sit down beside me, and let us talk of verse—I love it, and I love Scotland too." We sat down together, and though several Academicians came into the room, he heeded them not, but expatiated on the kindness he had experienced at Glasgow, and his admiration of the passionate songs of Burns. He told me, also, that the old English ballads of Percy had made a strong impression on his mind; and instanced Sir Cauline, as one of the happiest stories in verse. "I am making," said he, "a statue of Burns—will you do me the kindness to come and see it?" I promised, and parting then with mutual assurances of remembrance, some weeks elapsed before I had an opportunity of paying my respects to him in Buckingham Street. He received me with his hat in his hand, and conducted me into his little studio among models and sketches. There was but one chair, and a small barrel, which held coals, with a board laid over it—on the former he seated me, and occupied the latter himself, after having removed a favourite black cat, who seemed to consider the act ungracious. Our talk was all concerning poetry and poets—he listened well pleased to my description of the person of Burns, and said, "a manly man, and his poetry is like him."

During the year which succeeded this interview, he was occasionally ailing, but his suffering was little, nor did he abstain from making sketches, or from enjoying the company of his friends. Of friends he had not a few—his earliest indeed were passed and gone—Hayley, whom he esteemed as a man; Banks, whom he admired as a poetic sculptor, and Romney, the only native painter, of whom, it is said, he was very fond. Thomas Hope and Samuel Rogers, dear for their genius and for their worth, were left, and to them he was much attached: he also respected Howard the painter, and Stothard was a man much after his own heart. He had sat for his bust to Baily, and was sitting to Jackson for that fine portrait of which an engraving of great merit appears in this volume. The winter had set in, and as he was never a very early mover, a stranger found him rising one morning when he called about nine o'clock. "Sir," said the visitant, presenting a book as he spoke, "this work was sent to me by the author, an Italian artist, to present to you, and at the same time to apologize for its extraordinary dedication. In truth, Sir, it was so generally believed throughout Italy that you were dead, that my friend determined to show the world how much he esteemed your genius, and having this book ready for publication he has inscribed it 'Al Ombra di Flaxman.' No sooner was the book published than the story of your death was contradicted, and the author affected by his mistake, which, nevertheless, he rejoices at, begs you will receive his work and his apology." Flaxman smiled—accepted the volume with unaffected mo-

desty, and mentioned the circumstance as curious to his own family and some of his friends.

This singular occurrence happened on Saturday, the 2d of December: the great sculptor was well and cheerful; next day he went to church—felt himself suddenly affected with cold—refused all medicine—went to bed, and when he rose on Monday assured his sister that he was well enough to receive Mr. Soane, Mr. Robinson, and part of the family of Mr. Tulk, whom he had invited to dinner. When these guests came they were touched with the change in his looks; but he assumed cheerfulness, presided at table, tasted wine with the ladies, said something pleasing to all, and they went away without any apprehension that they were to see him no more. An inflammation of the lungs was the result of the cold which affected him on Sunday—the disorder spread with fatal rapidity: he refused to go to bed, saying, "When I lie I cannot breathe," and sat in a cushioned chair, attended by his sister and by the sister of his wife. All attempts to arrest the deadly malady were in vain, and on Thursday morning, December the 7th, 1826, he passed, without a struggle, from a world of which he had long been the ornament. His body was accompanied to the churchyard of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, by the President and Council of the Royal Academy, on the 15th of December. The following words are inscribed on his tomb: "John Flaxman, R.A. P.S., whose mortal life was a constant preparation for a blessed immortality: his angelic spirit returned to the Divine Giver on the 7th of December, 1826, in the seventy-second year of his age."

Flaxman was small in stature, slim in form: he walked with something of a sidling gait; and his hair dark and long was combed down carelessly on either side of his head. It was a favourite theory of his, that the noblest spirit is ever magnificently lodged; yet when I think of his own little body and large soul, I incline more to the words of the poet whom he loved—

> That auld wanchancie carline Nature,
> To make amends for scrimpit stature,
> Has turned thee off a human creature
> On her first plan.

But whenever he talked all this disappeared: his forehead was fine: his large eyes seemed to emit light while he spoke: and the uncommon sweetness of his smile softened a certain proud expression of mouth and some coarseness of physiognomy. His dress was plain but not mean: a single-breasted brown coat—a waistcoat of black and white stripe, over the cape of which his shirt-collar was laid neatly down: dark cloth breeches, and ribbed mixed stockings, with shoes and buckles, suited well with the simplicity of the wearer. He aspired after no finery—kept neither coach nor servant in livery—considered himself more the companion than the master of his men—treated them to a jaunt in the country and a dinner twice a year, presiding among them with great good humour; and on times of more than common state—the Academy dinners for instance—he caused John Burge, his marble polisher, to stand behind his chair. To his men, of whom he employed

some twelve or fifteen, he was ever kind and indulgent. He made himself acquainted with their families and with their wants, and aided them in an agreeable and delicate way; when they were sick he gave them their wages and paid their doctors' bills; and if any of them happened to be unavoidably absent, he said, "Providence has made six days for work in the week—take your full wages." So generally was he beloved, and so widely was he known, that had you stopt a tipsy mason in the street and asked him what he thought of John Flaxman, he would have answered, "The best master God ever made." Such was the answer once given to that question in my hearing. Nothing of the alloy of meanness mingled with his nature. When he approached a hackney-coach stand near his own house, down went the steps of a dozen doors, and off went the hats of as many coachmen—all were desirous of a customer who never higgled: when he purchased marble he satisfied himself of the quality of the block, asked the price, and paid down the money—no abatement was demanded; and he has been known to return part of the money for a monument when he thought the price too high. "Flaxman, Sir," said an artist of eminence whom I need not name, "is inaccessible to either censure or praise—he is proud but not shy—diffident but not retiring—as plain as a peasant in his dress, and as humble as the rudest clown, yet even all that unites in making up this remarkable mixture of simplicity and genius—and were you to try *any other* ingredients, may I be hanged if you would form so glorious a creature!" He paused a little, and

added, "I wish he would not bow so low to the lowly—his civility oppresses.'

Flaxman usually rose at eight o'clock,—breakfasted at nine,—studied or modelled till one,—dined at that early hour, commonly upon one dish, and very sparingly,—then recommenced his modelling or his studies,—added a little reading,—drank tea at six,—talked with his wife and sisters, or with friends who happened to look in—and this in a lively, gay, eloquent strain, more frequently than a serious one; and when supper was served, conversed freely, and helped his friends largely, but took little himself. This, he used to say, was "an hour of much enjoyment." His kindness to students was unbounded: he opened the doors of his studio with no reluctant hand to young and old, and was lavish of his time and counsel on all in whom he recognised genius. "He was a rough-headed fellow who modelled that group," he once observed to me, looking at the work of a student; "but it has pleased God to give a rough-headed fellow finer genius sometimes than what he bestows on smoother men." "You remember the feebleness of his frame," said

During the composition of these sheets, I requested of a distinguished sculptor some information respecting his mode of study and his talents in company. "I cannot tell you," was the answer. "Flaxman, Sir, lived as if he did not belong to the world—his ways were not our ways. He had odd fashions—he dressed—you know how he dressed: he dined at one—wrought after dinner, which no other artist does—drank tea at six; and then, Sir, no one ever found him in the evening parties of the rich or the noble. he was happy at home, and so he kept himself; of all the members of the Academy, the man whom I know least of is Flaxman."

Sir Thomas Lawrence, addressing the students on Flaxman's death, "and its evident though gradual decay. Yet it was but lately that you saw him with you, sedulous and active as the youngest member—directing your studies with the affection of a parent—addressing you with the courtesy of an equal—and conferring the benefit of his knowledge and his genius as though he himself were receiving obligation." His domestic state was happy—his life simple and blameless: he was mild and gentle; and a more perfect exemplar of the good man was to be found in his conduct than in all the theories of the learned.

"The elements of Flaxman's style," said Sir Thomas Lawrence, "were founded on Grecian art—on its noblest principles—on its deeper intellectual power, and not on the mere surface of its skill. Though master of its purest lines, he was still more the sculptor of sentiment than of form, and whilst the philosopher, the statesman, and the hero, were treated by him with appropriate dignity, not even in Raphael have the gentler feelings and sorrows of human nature been treated with more touching pathos than in the various designs and models of this inestimable man. Like the greatest of modern painters, he delighted to trace from the actions of familiar life the lines of sentiment and passion; and from the populous haunts and momentary peacefulness of poverty and want, to form his inestimable groups of childhood and maternal tenderness with those nobler compositions from Holy Writ, as beneficent in their motive as they were novel in design. In piety the minds of Michael Angelo and Flaxman were the same—

I dare not assert their equality in art." Whatever resemblance he might bear in piety to Michael Angelo, and in his works to the antique and to Raphael, of this I feel sure, that in his productions he has still more resemblance to poetry and to nature.

Of his works there are four kinds: the Religious, the Poetic, the Classic, and the Historical. In each of these he has left specimens which give him high rank amongst the sons of genius; but in all of them he has not attained the same degree of excellence: in the historical he was embarrassed with the unpoetic costume of these days of buttons and capes; in the classic he was compelled to obey the antique; but in the poetic and the religious he has been surpassed in purity and simplicity by no modern sculptor. His religious compositions consist of groups and figures embodying moral and spiritual passages from Scripture; they are generally of small dimensions, and carved in moderate relief, or sketched in plaster, or outlined in books. Of these there cannot be less than a thousand—his studio walls are still covered with the models, and the books in which he made his sketches in pencil are preserved by his sister. It was a wish, which came on him early in life, to dedicate his genius to morality and devotion; and that he did not fully accomplish this high purpose was the fault of the age, not his. But he did much—almost every church has some devout imagination of his—some scripture miracle—some moral sentiment—some touching prayer—or some holy ordinance to which the pastor can allude, and his people turn and be edified. That they are in

small, and want the magnificence of works on which vast sums have been expended, is true, and it is a pity; but expansion would not have increased their vigour of sentiment, though it might have made them more imposing. A selection of those designs, with the passages which they embody, might be published to advantage.

In his poetic compositions are included some which are devout, and in his devotional some which are poetic; yet those strictly poetical are very numerous. His mind was essentially poetic —he had little sympathy with aught but what was dignified and romantic, and he loved to shed the light of his imagination on subjects trivial as well as permanent. His conception of the Knight of the Burning Cross is worthy of Spenser, while the austere composure and heroic loftiness of the pencilings which embody the plan are akin to Milton. They show, it is true, more of the nature of sketches for painting than for sculpture, and most of them are worthy of the richest colours; but it is probable they were made without a farther aim than of privately testifying his regard for his wife; and if so, it shows that he could be grand without much effort, and that his poetic power was no casual or accidental inspiration. Words can but faintly image out the succession of groups which pertain to this noble allegory. It was probably in allusion to these compositions that Sir Thomas Lawrence spoke when he said, "His solitude was made enjoyment to him by a fancy teeming with images of tenderness, purity, or grandeur. His genius, in the strictest sense of the words, was original and inventive."

The classic compositions of Flaxman include his Homer, Æschylus, Hesiod, Dante, and the Shield of Achilles. It is wonderful, while he pencilled these, how much he lived in the past, and how little in the present. All things of this age —all shapes which he found in nature—all feelings for existing loveliness were dismissed from his mind; and obtaining the prayer of Homer to his muse, things past became present, and the days of the "Tale of Troy divine" came back with all their warriors. The shield of Achilles is one of the worthiest of all these works—the very way in which he made it was peculiar—he modelled it roughly in clay, had it cast into plaster of Paris, and then finished it for the silver moulder. It was in this way that he made his chief works—no one could work so felicitously in plaster as himself; it carried a softness and a beauty from his touch which it could derive from no other hand. Of the twelve wondrous scenes which adorn the shield, there is not one which is not replete with beauty of its own. All is moving and breathing—there is the gentleness of peace, the tumult of war, and the charm of wedded love. "His purity of taste," says Sir Thomas Lawrence, "led him early in life to the study of the noblest reliques of antiquity, and a mind, though not then of classic education, but of classic bias, urged him to the perusal of the best translations of the Greek Philosophers and Poets, till it became deeply imbued with those simple and grand sentiments which distinguished the productions of that favoured people. He has penetrated into the Iliad and Odyssey with a far deeper sense of the majesty of Homer than his

great contemporary Canova, who dedicated his whole life to the renovation of the antique; but indeed he never failed to catch the peculiar inspiration of whatever poet his fancy selected for illustration. We own the group at once as the offspring of the spirit of Homer or Æschylus or Dante; and the engravings from these works have given Flaxman a more truly European reputation than perhaps any other English sculptor has as yet achieved.

Of his historical works I have already, perhaps, said enough. I conceive they are less worthy of his name than any others of his productions. The poetic image of the subject appeared to his fancy at once; but the reality confounded him, and he might exclaim with Fuseli, "Nature puts me out." Generals with their tassels, tags, orders, and epaulets—aldermen with their confirmed gout, corporation buttons, and civic wigs—and bishops with their lawn sleeves, and ladies with their puckered gowns, spangles and trinkets, suited ill with the poetic Flaxman—he failed in works where no one could wish him great success.

Had his skill with the chisel equalled his talents with the modelling tool and pencil, Flaxman would have obtained a more universal admiration. An anonymous critic having recently charged him with a certain air of stiffness and want of flexibility in his compositions, Campbell the poet spoke eloquently in his behalf. If the critic alluded to the designs for Homer, he ought to have known that the artist aimed at general and not individual character, knowing that the details of nature which portraiture requires diminish the dignity of the

heroic; and if he alluded to his marbles, I can have no hesitation in saying, that he has fallen into an error. Flaxman is stiff in the *workmanship* of his marble only—there is much simplicity but no stiffness in his conceptions.

"Peace be with the memory of him who died," as Sir Thomas Lawrence happily said, "in his own small circle of affection; enduring pain, but full of meekness, gratitude, and faith!"

END OF VOL. III.

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